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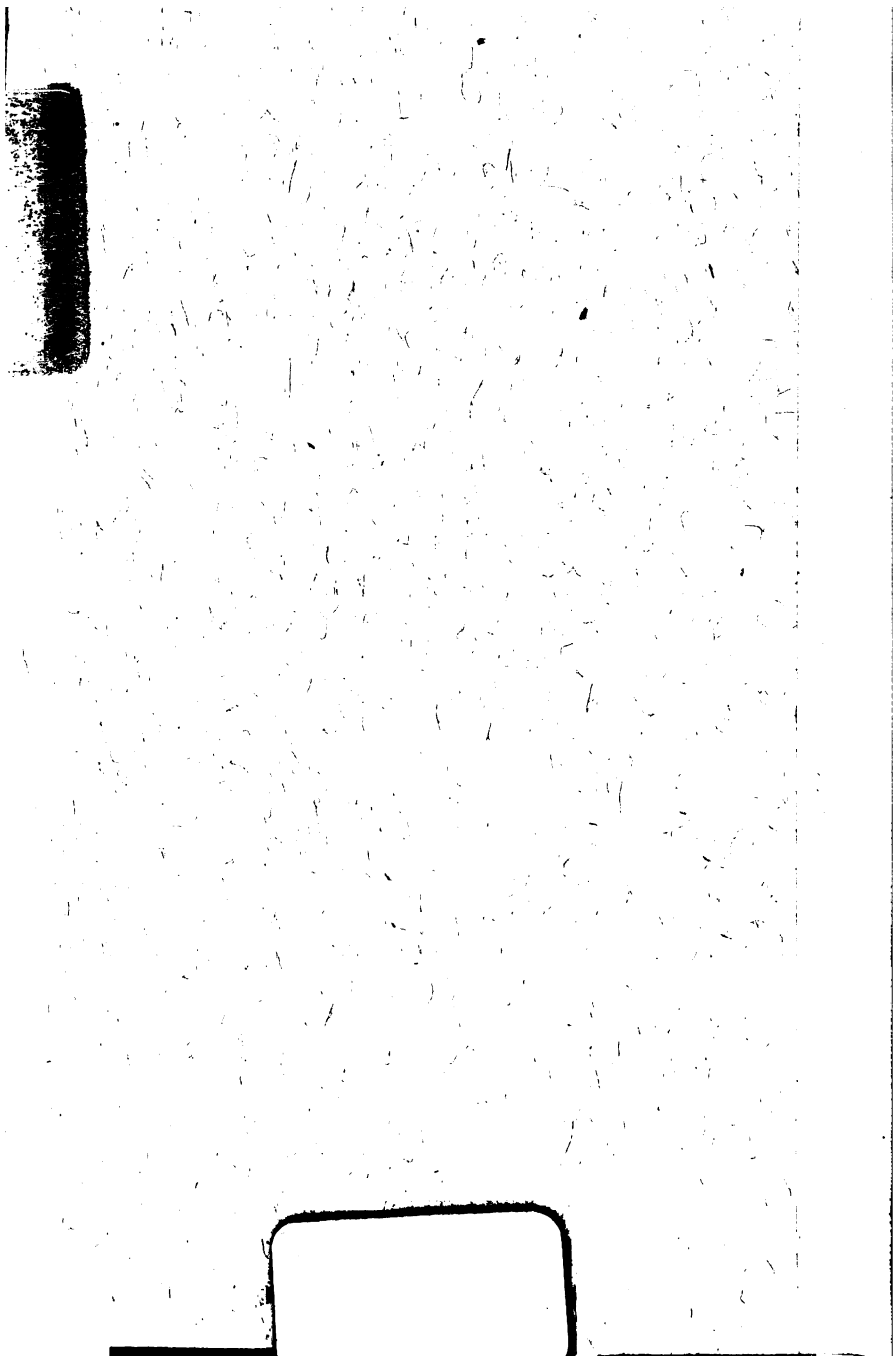
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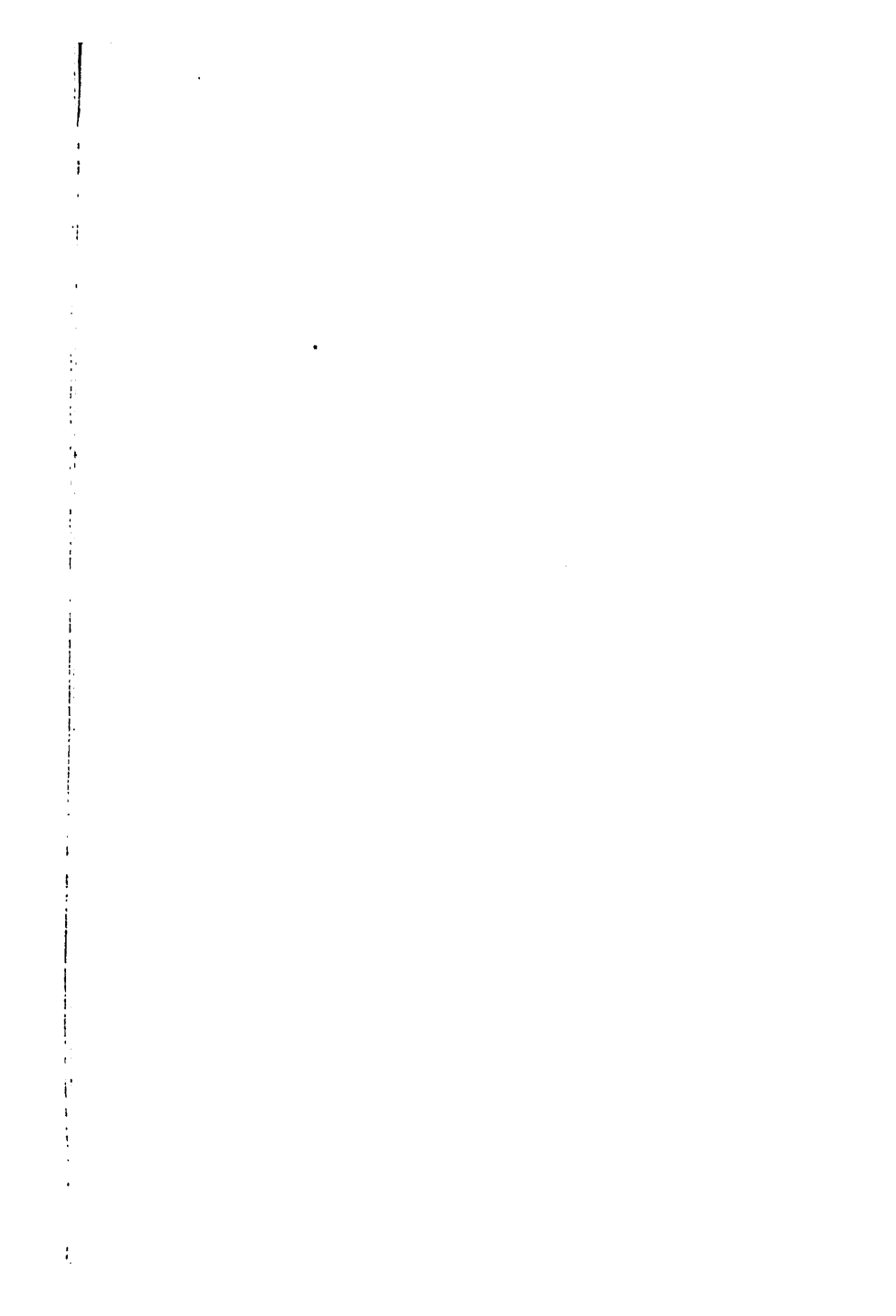
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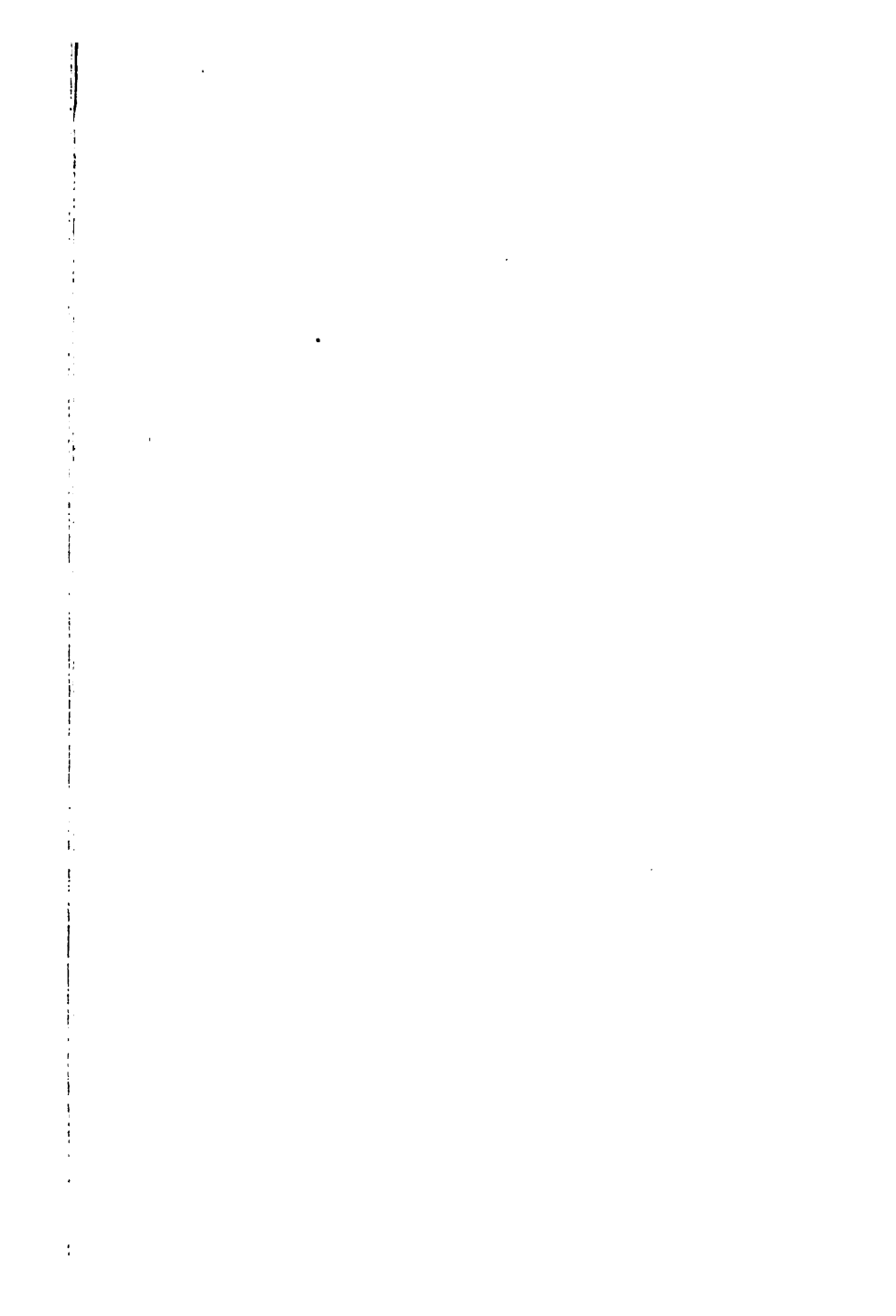
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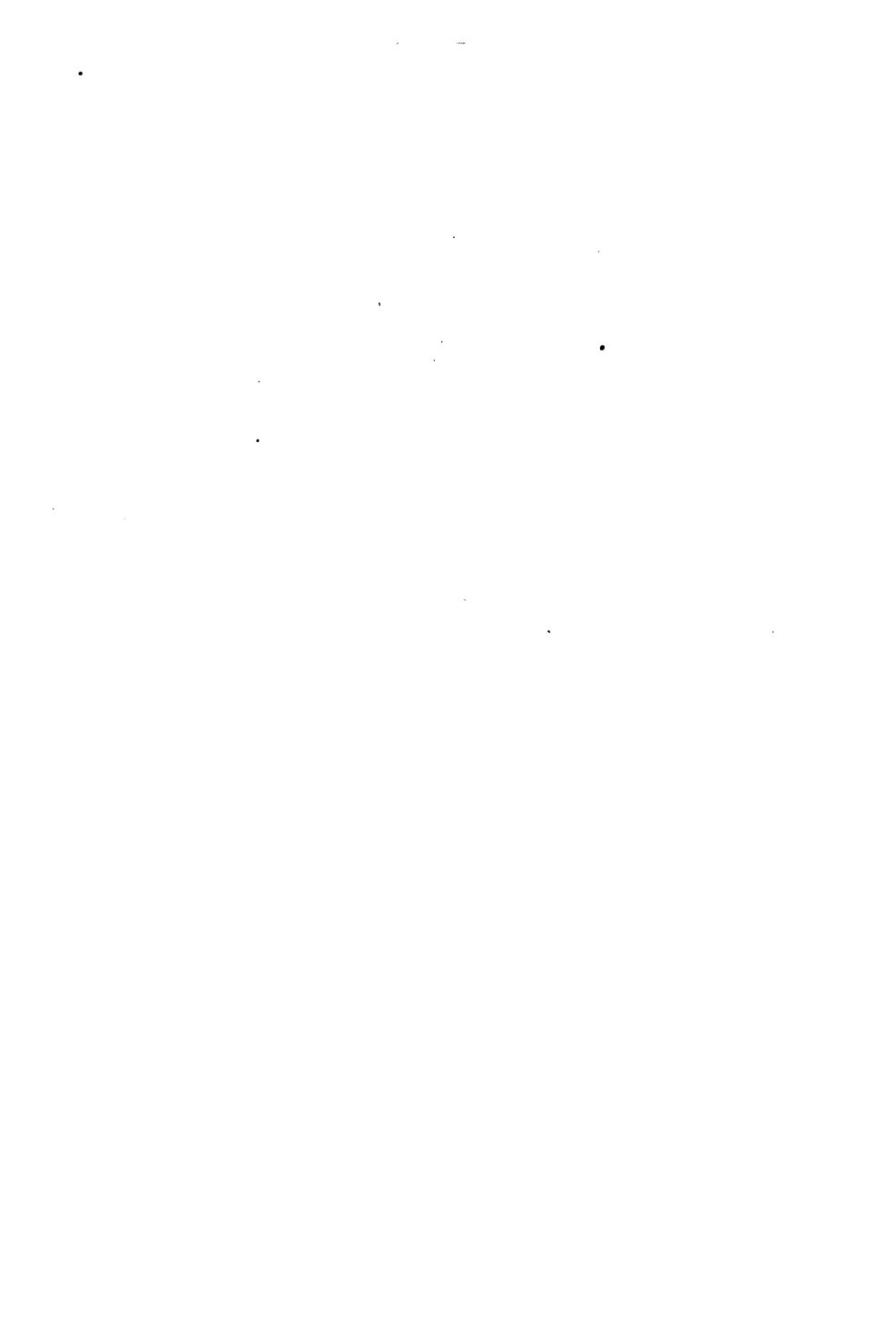










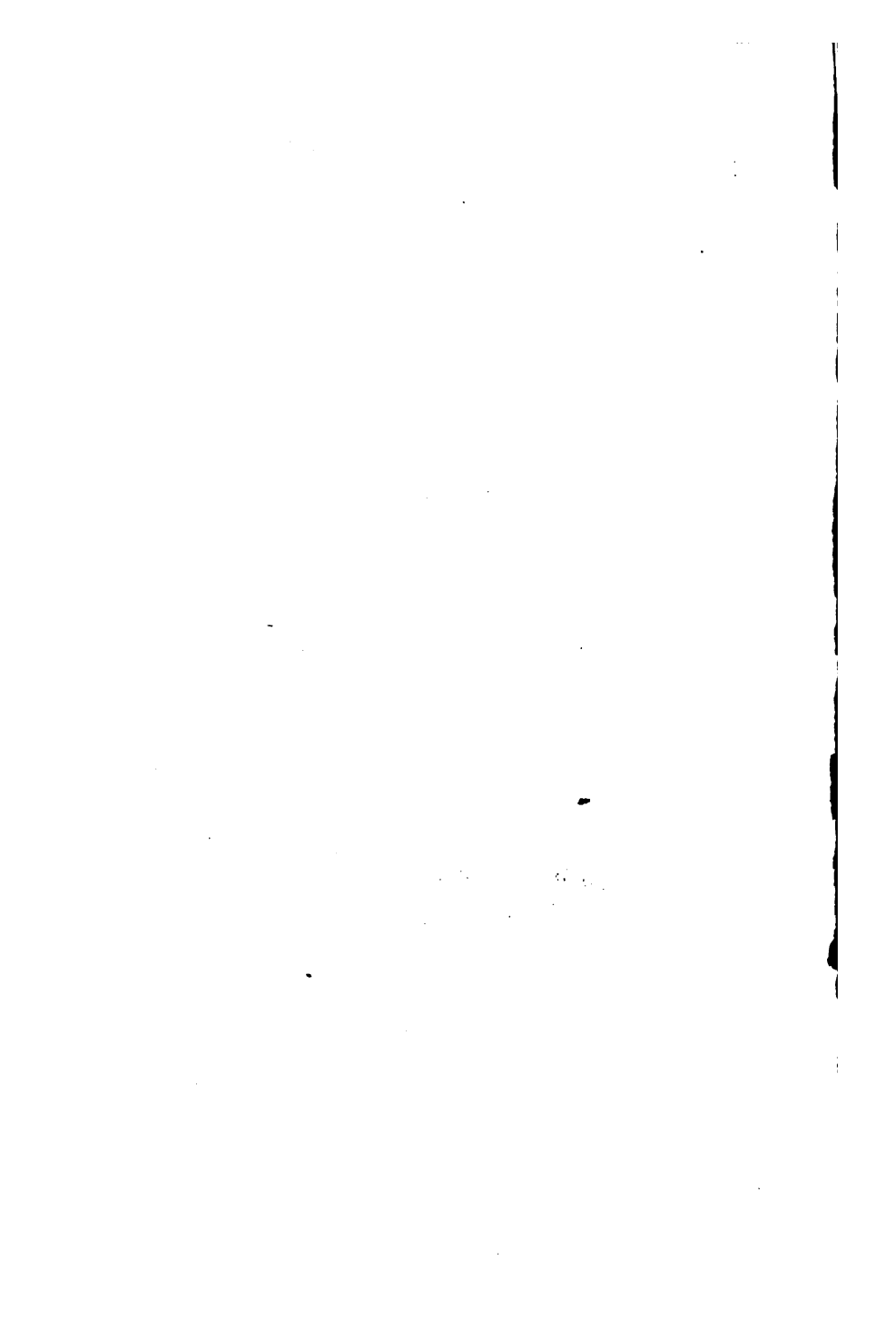


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Glimpses of Three Nations



NEW YORK CITY

Glimpses
Of Three Nations

By

G. W. Steevens

Author of "With Kitchener to Khartum"
"In India," etc.

EDITED BY VERNON BLACKBURN

WITH A PREFACE BY

CHRISTINA STEEVENS

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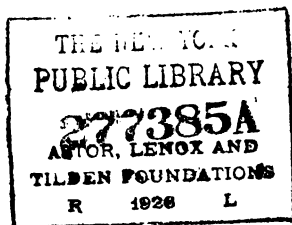
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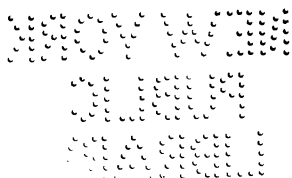
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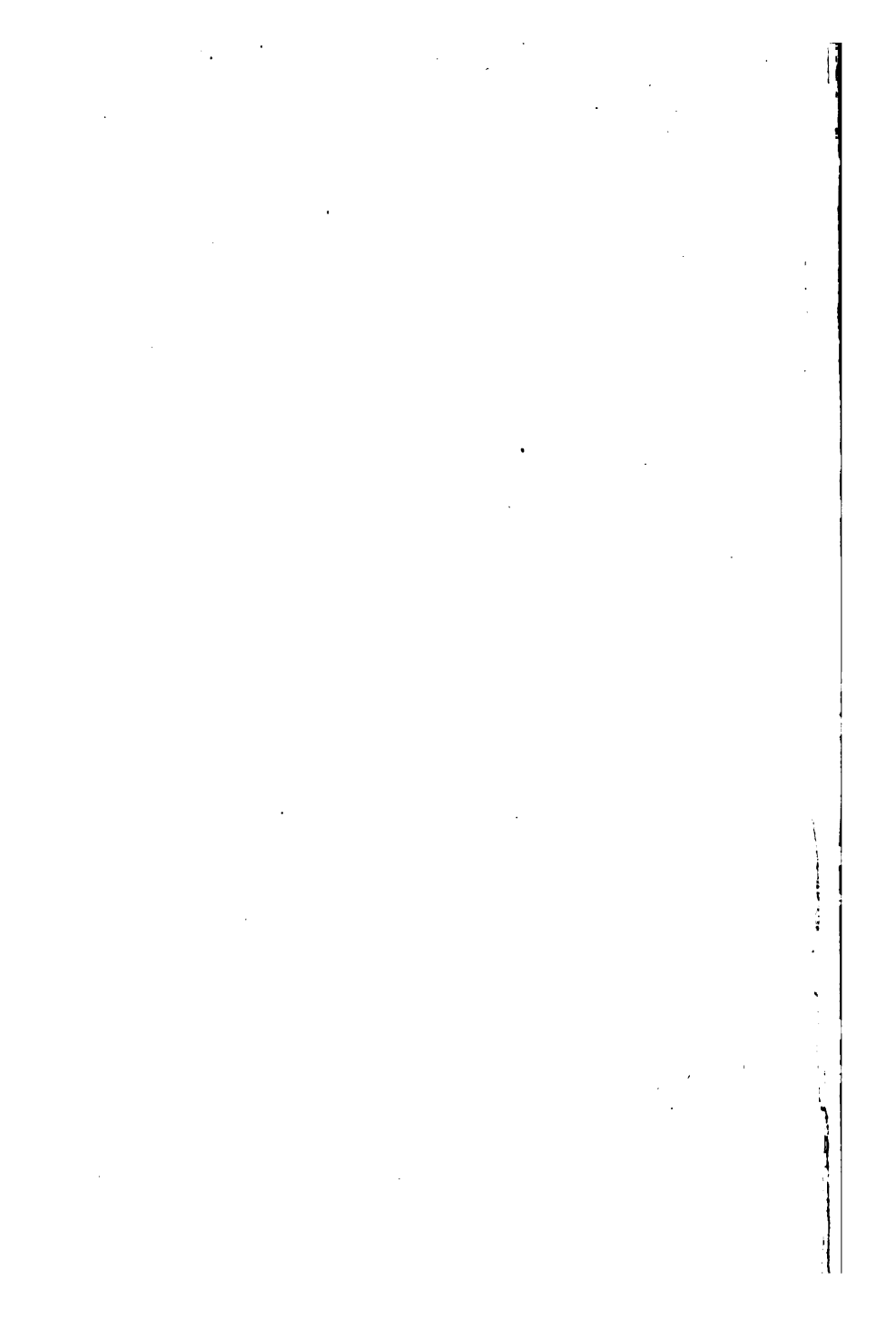


Preface

IT seems to me that some explanation is needed of why these few chapters about London are now republished. My dear husband intended his *magnum opus* to be an account of London in its various and contradictory aspects. Such a work was much discussed between us, and the publication of it was even arranged with our good friend Mr. Blackwood. As usual Mr. Harmsworth forwarded this, as he did every other scheme likely to benefit George Steevens' career; and the chapters as they appear in this volume appeared in the "Daily Mail." We were much pressed to publish the letters on Paris and Germany, and when it was decided so to do, I thought it well to add those concerning the city he loved so well and knew so thoroughly. That they are mere suggestions of what he intended will be obvious to all who knew him.

CHRISTINA STEEVENS

MERTON ABBEY



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LONDON

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CHAPTER I

THE ARGUMENT

“ You know London ? ” asked the taskmaster.

“ London,” I answered ; “ why, of course I do. I ’ve lived in London — ”

“ Then, can you tell me — what nobody else seems to be able to do — why London is so enormous, and always increasing ? ”

“ You see,” I answered idiotically, “ I ’ve been away in India. No, I ’m hanged if I can. What do they all do ? ”

“ Yes, what do they do ? I went out on my bicycle into the country the other day, and I counted over a hundred people bicycling — on a week-day.”

“ I see scores every day, too, riding and bicycling and golfing, and some even trying to patch up broken automobiles.”

“ And then at Lord’s or the Crystal Palace—— ”

“ Or at Hamptom Court, or at concerts, or at Earl’s Court —— ”

“ Do you know,” said he solemnly, “ there must be at least a hundred thousand people holiday-making in London every day.”

“ And nobody knows who they are, or where they come from, or why they have nothing to do.”

“ What a place London is! And we know nothing at all about it.”

With that I perceived the drift of the taskmaster’s conversation. He was luring me into professing an interest in London, and the next step would be a request for articles. Well, why not? Why not travel in London?

“ You talk about the contrasts of Bombay,” he cried, dissembling his enthusiasm no longer. “ What can compare with the contrasts of London? Lascars in Stepney and French in Soho, lodging-houses in Bloomsbury, where nobody goes but Spaniards or New Zealanders —— ”

“ Or Babus.”

“ Indian princes,” he corrected. “ But never mind about the foreigners; think of London itself. Think of the kinds of life. There’s the lodging-house life—do you ever notice the language of the advertisements: ‘ Bed sitting, partial board, h. and c.’? — we know something about that. But

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what do we know about the riverside life, the suburban life — or lives? — Brixton is n't a bit like West Ham — the night life, the underground life? Think: in one day you can be at Plumstead and see them firing the big guns, at Epsom and see them training a horse, at St. Paul's for a service, at the Oval for a cricket-match, and wind up with a dinner-party in Mayfair."

He was going too fast for me. "I don't think you could get from Plumstead to Epsom in one day," I said, "unless you walked."

"Well, there you are again," he cried with renewed enthusiasm. "The communications of London! Do you know that London is the most backward white man's city in the world?"

"It's certainly behind Colombo or Madras, or Cairo, or Leadville, Colo.," I admitted.

"The most backward white man's city in the world," he repeated with a kind of boastful shame. "Did you ever travel by omnibus? Think of it — a medieval box on wheels, drawn by two obsolete horses, going an antediluvian six miles an hour, blocking up the street. And that's the vehicle of London. Have n't you noticed that they've actually increased of late years? Do you know" — he spoke slowly, as if fearing to be unjustly severe — "I believe London people like travelling by omnibus."

"I know they'll walk miles out of their way to find one," I said.

"Wonderful! Really, London is by far the most wonderful of all capitals. Then the little bits of progress you find tucked away in corners as if they were ashamed of themselves. Cable-cars in Brixton and Highgate ——"

"Oh! Is that running again?"

"That running? Of course: how little you know of London, after all! But those are the only mechanical tramways in all London."

"Unless you count the City and South London."

"The what?"

"City and South London—electric Underground Railway from Stockwell to the Monument."

"Good gracious! I've never heard of it."

"Never heard of it! Why, it's been running ten years: how little you know of——"

"Ah, but that's just what I was saying. London knows nothing of itself. Did you ever hear of Mr. Baxter's steam omnibus? That was about 1830, and all London was excited about it. Now you might start a steam omnibus or a petroleum perambulator anywhere you like in London, and the rest of London would never hear of it. Kensington knows nothing of West Ham."

"And West Ham does n't know where Ham is."

"How should it? Then what do we know

The Argument 7

about the history of London? A little from Pepys and Horace Walpole — but before that? Tudor London; monastic London. Did you ever see that monument in Hyde Park that says the spring beneath it was granted to the monks for a perpetual water-supply?”

“Never heard of it. But do you know that Oliver Cromwell tried to drive a four-in-hand in Hyde Park? The horses bolted, and Cromwell was thrown off the box on to the pole, slipped off that and caught his foot in the harness, and was dragged along; a pistol went off in his pocket, and after all he got off unhurt.”

“You don’t say so: I never heard of that. But I know that in James the First’s reign some men were hung for deer-stealing in the Park. Well — then think of the villages in London. You don’t know them? Well, there’s that street — High Street, I think it’s called — from Shaftesbury Avenue into Oxford Street. Did you ever see such a typical village street? High Street you see — the village street overtaken and swallowed by London. It was the village of St. Giles’s. If you had been hanged at Tyburn you would have been dragged on a hurdle along High Holborn, and at St. Giles’s they’d have given you a bowl of ale at the leper hospital that used to be there. Then you went on and were hanged in Con-

naught Square. Or take Marylebone High Street. It's hardly a hundred years since people lived there in the country, and drove up to town in their coaches. Well, then, another thing—the small trades—the small parasitic trades of London. Do you know—I met an old man the other day who makes his living by selling favours to cabmen to put on their horses' heads. That by day—and at night he sells sweets to cabmen and railway porters. What do you think of that for a trade? And he said he made a very good living."

"Well, I knew the wife of a man who made his living by drilling worm-holes in sham old furniture. His wife came to me and said her man was out of work, sick. 'What's his trade?' I asked. 'Oh, 'e's a worm-eater,' she said. 'No wonder he's ill,' said I, and then she explained what a worm-eater is."

"It's simply endless. The trades of London, the cries of London, the languages of London, the beauties of London——"

"The sewers of London ——"

"The food of London ——"

"The vices of London ——"

"The charities of London ——"

"The follies of London ——"

"The amusements of London ——"

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“The loneliness of London — yes, it’s
simply——”

“Endless. And we know ——”

“Nothing ——”

“At all about it.”

“I shall begin,” I said resolutely, “to explore
London to-morrow.”

CHAPTER II

THE FIRST CROSSING OF LONDON

AT half-past nine, on a dull, close morning, I set out, alone and unarmed, to cross London on foot from end to end. The feat may have been performed by other explorers, principally tramps, but few, if any, have lived to think it worth mentioning. I would be the Nansen or Stanley of London.

I happened to live exactly on the hem of London. If you go out by the back gate you are in market-gardens and dairy-farms, presently among coppices and downs, and so on to the sea. If you go out of the front door you are in a London street with little shops and big vans and board schools. The house used to be a country dwelling for a rich merchant or a retired diplomatist still interested in affairs: hither he drove down from town to enjoy his fruit-trees and rose-garden, his lawn and old elms. There are still a dozen such on this south-western fringe of London; but now that the tide of London's slum has washed

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up all about them, rich merchants desire them no more.

All I had to do, then, for my adventure was to make for the heart of London — say, Trafalgar Square—and go on straight till I came out on the other side. I should have the monster then in section, and be able to see the grain of it, so to speak.

There was not likely to be much, I told myself, to stir reflection or imagination in the suburbs that I have known since I was a boy. But going along for the first time in life, with the idea of London in my head, I soon recognised my mistake. Merton, Tooting, Balham, and Clapham are not names like Runnymede or Marston Moor. Nothing ever happened at any of them except rare and transitory murders, and they are not peopled by saints and heroes and men of genius, nor yet by melodramatic blackguards and victims. They are quite commonplace — in short, suburban.

Yet, you find yourself giving them, as members of London, a significance and even a distinct individuality apiece. Merton is nearly all new, shabby and patchy — the type of a district that has never been quite sure whether it is growing up as a suburb or as a village by itself — that worst of its kind, a village close to a great town. Even now it is not quite sure that it is London.

You do not see the morning and evening crowds stream in and out of its stations. Little glimpses of it are rural—a little grey bow-windowed coaching-inn, a tar-boarded mill by a black pool, or the leaves and blossoms of horse-chestnut trees rising off a backwater of the Wandle like a great altar covered with tapers. But the most of it is too poor and bewildered even to be vulgar. The tiny shops crouch and tuck in their elbows, afraid of being squeezed by London. The jerry-built £40 houses spread out their terraces flauntingly; but as yet they have not quite conquered the land, and little patches of rubber-strewn, half-hearted green lie derelict between old and new. You can see that this outermost suburb is London in the making—all sorts of houses, all sorts of employments, all sorts of people—not yet quite sure of its destiny, and waiting for London to come and mould it to the shape that London will.

A high wall with a big, brown, broken-windowed house—inside the gates a litter of tree-trunks, and bavins so newly cut that they are still trying to bud—ushers you into Tooting. There is no need to tell you what that means. It is the custom to smile at the very mention of Lower Tooting, but even I remember it as a narrow, huddled, red-roofed village street, and charming. Now they have brought down the tram-line, and they

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are widening the road in front of the new £40 terraces; the new shops are already getting middle-aged. Even at this late hour gentlemen with bags, in frock-coats and tall hats, are running after the Blackfriars Bridge tramcar. And when you get to Balham the process of Londonising is complete. The last double-gated houses with stables are coming down; the line of shops in the second-hand Mount Street style is almost continuous; in the streets that take off from the high road the villas — fifty pounders now, many of them, and even more — are like peas in a pod.

Balham is frankly suburban. It owes its existence to the demands of inner London — of the seat of government, of the commercial centre of the country, of the world's broker — for more men than actual inner London can house. The shops live on the villas, and the villas live on London proper. Balham is a parasite — the type of a suburb. But though it has been nothing else in my recollection, yet there is somehow a change. It seems that London, which appears the most conservative of all great cities, is continually changing after all. The shops seem different from what they were. Ten years ago they were all single and small, and the business was the property of the man who lived above it. Now a few have grown and added window to window,

and the others seem to be dying out. Now you see names like Lipton or Freeman, Hardy, and Willis — names you know from advertisements — instead of simple, struggling Smithers or Perkins. Amalgamations and joint-stock companies are crushing the life out of our old friends; another generation and there will be no more shopkeepers in London — only shareholders and directors and managers.

Another feature in the shops I seemed to notice as new and spreading. Even the smaller businesses seem shy of being known by personal names. They give themselves titles now — the Far-Famed Cake Company, the Ten Per Cent Wine Stores, the Assembly-Rooms Dining-Rooms. You find the same tendency in such different places as New York and Port Said; but in London it is novel. It means, presumably, the same thing as the appearance of the branches of large firms — that we do our marketing nowadays not with men, but with names. It is no longer the shopkeeper you deal with — the man you know — but the name; and, that being so, of course you have the highest-sounding names possible. Now Clapham — a suburb of quite a respectable antiquity, which sowed its wild oats of Methodism as long ago as Thackeray's time, and has now settled down into a general-purpose suburb, like the modestest of

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them. Here, too, the population must have thickened vastly in the few years I have known it. But what arrests me principally is the Common, where, as a boy, I plucked gorse — illegally — and jumped ditches, and even found an occasional red blackberry. Now — O County Council! — now there is a painted iron band-stand, with painted iron chairs stacked round it, and a municipal refreshment-room, where they sell mineral waters and buns. The poor thing — transplanted child of France or Italy, where out-of-door cafés flourish in their native air and soil — is small and dark; nobody seems to be buying anything in it, nor does it seem to wish to sell; plainly it is saying, "I am an orphan, far from my native land." And then all the grass is railed in nowadays, till the paths look like corridors in a prison.

Yet let us be just even to the London County Council. In my youth nobody seemed ever to be taking the least care of Clapham Common; now it is plainly looked after and cared for, and that very sensibly. In the days when you found red blackberries, you hardly found grass for a cricket-pitch; now the bare places are resown by sections and the young turf enclosed, so that the whole place is at least green. Green — that is all you can say for it, and all you can expect in the middle of such a beleaguerment of houses. The cheer-

less, artificial-looking, green-baize green, too, that grows under a sky which has no colour but only weight — but still green and so far grateful.

Now I came down into Battersea — down the gradient and down in the world. Hitherto London had grown comelier towards its rich centre ; now comes a header into poverty. Dingy and hard-working and poor — here was the poor man's suburb, a new phenomenon. Highly honest and respectable, the Queen's Road, with well-built houses, is as clean as anything could be among so many chimneys. It is a poor quarter, but not a slum — the home, not of vice, but of honourable labour. Choking in the reek of the town, seamed with railway viaducts, pitted with goods-stations, Battersea yet commands at least as much respect as pity.

Past the Park — another testimonial to the care and prudence of the London County Council — over the trembling bridge, into Chelsea, where the poor are housed. It is not beautiful, though the trees are green here and there ; but the masses of model dwellings, where alleys were, are the sign of a great reform enacted in our lifetime all over London, and still going on. And now — as abruptly as you entered — you quit poor man's London again. Round a corner, in a second, you are out of suburbs and in the centre. Behind you

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flannel petticoats are drying from the windows. Before you roll the carriages of the Belgravians, under the wing of Buckingham Palace.

London's effects are broad, but they should be melodramatic enough for anybody. I made a half-way house of a club, reflecting, with a foolish sense of a great discovery, that the clothes which had been seemly in Balham and offensively rich in Battersea seem a kind of nakedness in St. James's Street.

CHAPTER III

FURTHER POINTS IN THE CROSSING OF LONDON

IN the centre, the real London, along Pall Mall, through Trafalgar Square, along the Strand and Fleet Street, I noticed that I noticed nothing. In the suburbs, whether poor or well-to-do, I found things worth remarking, even when I knew the districts quite well. But the heart of London gave no such suggestions: it was just there to be accepted. These streets are not especially beautiful or supremely important. They are not so elegant as Mayfair, or so imperial as Whitehall, or so rich as the City. Yet, somehow, they are the heart of London. To them and from them sets the full tide of London's blood. Clubs and theatres and newspapers are their chief features — parasitic institutions all, in their way. They are not elements of the city's life, but amenities of it: they reflect rather than constitute London. We do not live there, and most of us do not work there. Yet if you wanted to lay an ambush for a man your likeliest place would be there: you

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would get him in time, between St. James's Palace and Ludgate Circus. You can hardly ever pass along this line without seeing somebody whom you know if only by his portrait.

I struck up Fetter Lane — one of the inside seams of London. I had read of a proposal to improve and renovate it in 1863, but I judged it must have fallen through. If you like antiquarianism, know that this street was named after the *faytours*, or loafers, that infested it in early times : there are a few left still. Across Holborn Circus, and in Charterhouse Street, you come on a second, more sombre epitome of London. Here is Smithfield, that supplies London's kitchen ; St. Bartholomew's Hospital, that instructs many doctors, and tends London when it has fallen under a dray. Farringdon Road is the same sort of supply depot ; only here you get London at its most dramatic and its most ironical. Underneath towering wholesale warehouses, whence clanking cranes drop great bales into broad vans, trail lines of the smallest and most retail tradesmen in the world. Indoors they sell by the ton ; outdoors, by the ha'porth : and you can buy an odd volume of a set of seventeenth-century sermons, or a portrait in oils of somebody else's grandmother with a hole through it, or a condemned pair of opera-glasses, or a brass handle from somebody else's door.

The costers' stalls stop at Clerkenwell Road ; but the character of the quarter remains. You go through a cañon of warehouses on one side, and artisans' dwellings on the other — each as tall and sheer, as grim and dingy, as the other. I have always been rather puzzled what to make of Clerkenwell. None of its buildings seem to have any fronts, — it seems a city of backs. I now begin to think that this is the outward symbol of its essential character. It appears to be the store-room and box-room of London — a place where things are kept, a place where they emerge when you want them. Accustomed to have things when you want them, you forget in your ingratitude the very existence of the store-room till you stray into it. If you buy tobacco from Salmon & Gluckstein, or pills from Warner's Safe Cure, it never occurs to you that there must be a place where they fix the prices and concoct the drugs. But, of course, there is ; and here you find them both in Clerkenwell Road. Presently, after crossing into Old Street, you are assailed by a vigorous and familiar smell, half acid, half sickly : you have come to the place where they make Champion's vinegar. The explorer records such discoveries with a peculiar satisfaction. You would expect everybody to know where these things be ; yet he alone among travellers has tracked them to

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their sites, and gazed with emotion at their unveiled sublimities.

By the time you have got so far along Old Street the landscape has changed again. The gloomy walls of building sink, the roadway widens. Clerkenwell Road looks half-deserted; Old Street bustles and tinkles with animation; you seem to have come again to a place where live people, not commodities. Yet the place seems to wear a more homogeneous aspect than, for instance, Battersea, where people of all trades seem merely to live and buy their necessaries. Look into the shops and you get the clue: you are coming into the home of furniture-makers. Here is a turner's; there a window full of brass knobs and drawer-handles; beyond, they seem to specialise on upholstery; at the corner is a timber-yard. Presently I pass the end of Curtain Road — a sheer street of furniture-dealers, the metropolis of the trade. Every other man you meet is employed about furniture in one way or another. In the streets that radiate from Shoreditch Station almost every other house is a workshop or a warehouse or a dealer's. Within a mile are concentrated more than half the furniture-makers of London.

Up to now I had traversed all my route before; now I plunged boldly into the virgin forests of Kingsland Road. To my shame, I have to report

no discoveries. I observed that it was very, very long — pavements are not such easy going to anybody accustomed to anything else — but for the rest it was a street of the inner suburbs, full of omnibuses and tramcars, flanked by a railway, lined with shops, dotted with stalls, adorned with vast public-houses. Kingsland High Street was not different: I struck off eastward, desiring to refresh the soles of my feet on Hackney Downs. From the reports of geographers I determined that I must be very near them.

I passed through streets of residential suburb, the analogue of the newer parts of Clapham. So far, to judge from my route, London seemed a series of concentric belts, like a target. The bull's-eye was somewhere about Trafalgar Square; there was the central meeting district, the central business district — Clerkenwell and Pimlico; the poor suburbs — Hoxton and Battersea; the better-off suburbs — Hackney and Clapham. With the analogies came the cold thought that Hackney Downs might be even as Clapham Common. With the thought came a railway bridge, and beyond it a smoke-drenched island of green with a notice-board, and on the board — yes; I knew it — Hackney Downs. There is a manufactory of something noisome near it, and the black fumes from its stack rolled all over, voluptuously throt-

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ting the poor little bit of green — if such are the lungs of London, give me asphyxia. Again, the County Council had done its best, enclosing the place with iron hurdles along the footpaths, so that the land might grow grass and cricket as rotation crops. There was grass to look at, certainly; but grass under the leaden sky again, with the additional torture of the black smoke — once more the vicious, poisonous green-baize of poor London's only spring-time.

Hackney Downs behind me, I looked for my north-eastern Balham, and found it in Clapton. Clapton has still a few decorous green-brown garden walls and houses left, but I turned out of it very soon. Now, pounding along the Lea Bridge Road — going a little short and footsore by now — I was in the straight. The Lea Bridge Road would surely take me clear out of London. The scenery was promising — scanty grass, waterworks, a railway station that seemed to have gone to sleep, railway viaducts without stations or houses. But, for all that, tram-lines still pursued the road, and I never lost sight of houses. Courage, however: it could not be far. From the top of the next rise I should surely see the country.

What I did see, to my disgust, was London beginning all over again. A green with the vamped-up remnants of a village on one side, and then streets on streets again. I came to cross-roads

with trams and 'buses radiating everywhither. The London pavements were beginning to crawl up my shins. Still, there was hope: it was just like Tooting—down to the very reappearance of the Far-Famed Cake Company, which appears to hide its fame in very remote tracts. Still the dauntless explorer toiled on. Now there appeared a mass of trees before me, a gate, and within it grassy slopes. I pressed on with fresh vigour. Now I was walking under elms and chestnuts; now——

London again! A regular main-street of it, confound it! With shops almost up to the Balham standard. Had I turned round inadvertently, and was I heading straight back into it again? Now came a hill, with the mocking tram-lines running up it, eligible residences on either hand. I had finally decided that the thing was endless. There was no edge of London at all. . . . Aha! Trees and grass! And not only that, but trees beyond them, and trees beyond. And blossoming hawthorn. And especially no houses. I felt like Stanley emerging from darkest Africa. Epping Forest, and no more London!

It had taken over four hours and a half of actual walking, from which I infer that the distance was a little short of twenty miles. It took me, by tram-car, omnibus, train, cab, train, and omnibus, three hours to get back again.

CHAPTER IV

LONDON'S LARDER

UPON the airless oven of a hot night in London had succeeded a pale and stale and sultry dawn. It is the hour when the least merciful of tropical climates at last gives you a rich choice between sleep and exhilarating exercise. But in this dry season the air of London is already used up for the year; even at dawn you cannot get stuff to fill your lungs.

Load such a breathless atmosphere with the smell of raw mutton fat before breakfast, and the delicate stomach revolts. But nobody except myself noticed it in the Central Markets at Smithfield. Everybody else had something else to do. At five o'clock the great building was already framed round its whole extent with carts. Outside stood the carriers' and butchers' carts — tall, tilt-covered vans, long open ones, and little two-wheeled delivery-carts. Here and there, in a van, lay a blue-smocked boy, snoring peacefully with his mouth open to vacuous heaven. No wonder, for

most of these lads began their work hours before. Here was a cart from Stamford Hill, another from Wimbledon, others from Bayswater, Kilburn, Lewisham, and as far away as Epsom. But most frequent were the vans of the carriers, who serve the nearer districts. The butcher buys the meat in the market and gives it over to the carrier; it is home before he is.

A few vans were piling up with red and creamy meat, but hardly any were yet away. Under the cavernous arcades of the market the railway waggons had not yet ceased unloading. Hoofs of heavy horses rang on the stones as van after van backed to the pavement. Out of one came halves of bullocks wrapped in thin canvas branded with names from Kansas and Texas; another was laden with round-barrelled sheep; a third was a heap of pigs, their red, dripping jaws grinning in bunches, like a trophy of massacre. Pile after pile grew small and disappeared; van after van thundered up full; the stream of carcasses seemed endless.

You passed inside, out of the pale young sunlight — and, lo, you were in night again, only night shining yellow with a thousand gas-jets. By their hot light the whole place showed crimson and gold — crimson lean and golden fat of a maze of meat. Row on row on row, the car-

casses hung in regular lines, like the trees of an avenue. Out of the central aisle gave the recesses of the shops: in long white coats the salesmen stood among walls of meat. You turned round to find your view blocked by another wall; looked between the chinks of flesh and beyond and beyond gleamed ranks on ranks of crimson lean and golden fat. You saw no walls and no partitions except of meat; shoulders and red necks were above you; underfoot the pavement was greasy, and in your nostrils was the perpetual smell of cold fat. To connect all this with your own puny dinner was impossible; you were in the garish basement of an ogre's castle.

Sleepy still, I half wondered if I dreamed. It helped the fancy that the place was strangely silent. Butchers and white-coated salesmen bargained in voices that the proportions of the hall reduced to whispers; the deep-chested porters staggered along — a couple under a side of beef, a couple of lambs on the shoulders of one — so silently and so hidden under their burdens that the carcasses seemed to be walking by themselves. Without noise or hurry, hour by hour, orderly, unceasing, incalculably vast, went on the daily titanic task — the provisioning of the larder of London.

Meanwhile, what does London eat? I begin with meat because it seems easiest. Very nearly

all London's meat comes into Smithfield Market, and as it is rapidly perishable you may assume that a day's or a month's supply fairly represents a day's or a month's consumption. The total weight of meat, I learn, that comes into the Central Markets in an average summer month is 34,422 tons. The significance of that huge figure you realise, I presume, as little as I do; roughly it means half a pound of meat daily for nearly five million people. Of this vast amount less than half comes from the British Islands; from London itself comes next to none. The provinces supply 15,272 tons, America 8,489, Australia and New Zealand 6,382, and the Continent — largely in the form of poultry — 4,309. Actually London eats more foreign meat than home-grown.

At the first sight, then, this growth in the import of meat implies no harm to anybody. He who likes his meat good gets it as good as ever; he who prefers it cheap gets it cheaper than ever. The butcher loses nothing; on the contrary, his profit on colonial meat is no less, and therewith steadier, than his profit on English or Welsh or Scottish. For you must know that there is a top price for home-grown meat which buyers will not exceed; therefore, to keep his business together the butcher often sells at an actual loss. There is no doubt about it that in the months of August

and September the business of almost every home-meat butcher is run at a loss: his customers are all out of town. No doubt he makes up on the year; but the foreign-meat butcher has no such vicissitudes against which to provide.

Nevertheless, the transformation of the meat trade has had one great result, which affects London. Butchers must be always with us, and so must salesmen and market porters; but the other industries of the trade are being driven out of the city. In our fathers' time nearly every butcher had his own slaughter-house and killed his meat in London. Railways and refrigerators have changed all that. Meat that comes into the country from elsewhere than London is generally killed at the port of arrival; provincial and Scottish and Welsh meat is killed at home and sent up to town as carcasses. The London slaughterman is dying out. The first blow was the opening of the Deptford Market in 1872, which struck hard at Islington; the decline of metropolitan slaughter-houses has almost finished the work. With the slaughtermen go the drovers who take beasts from the station to the market. Save for the growing importation of live-stock to be slaughtered at Deptford, both these trades might look forward to swift extinction.

Every trade that contributes to fill the belly of

London tells one tale. The appetite of the monster grows yearly, and the more it grows the less can it satisfy itself. Every year the field of supply recedes and widens, until the uttermost ends of the earth are all employed in pouring food and drink into that never-satiate maw.

Your greengrocer, for example, if he be a man of middle age or anything over, will have seen his trade transform itself out of all recognition. Go into his little parlour—do not stumble over the fruit-basket that prevents the door shutting, lest a customer should enter the shop unnoticed—sit down on the American-cloth armchair, and, if you are at all on terms with your greengrocer as a good householder should be, he will tell you.

If there was one staple of food, you would have said, where London might have kept production within or near its own borders, it would be perishable vegetables and fruit. They are ruined in a day; they cannot be kept in ice like meat or fish; they cannot be held back, once they come to maturity, in hope of a better price or a more restricted supply. Yet there is no trade that has been more completely changed in a man's lifetime by the opening of new and remote and alien sources of supply.

Your greengrocer buys at Covent Garden. (In his younger days he has used the Borough

Market.) There are also Spitalfields and Stratford, but they are out of the way and deal principally in the commoner goods. Nowadays you must go to Covent Garden if you want good stuff. Lord, and how the stuff has changed in his time! He can remember when there came into the whole market perhaps a score of pine-apples a day, and that only for a short season. Now costers sell them from barrows; and when costers sell a thing you may know that thing is the cheapest of the day—given away, may be. It is not the English pines that have increased; the thing is that the foreigners have taken to growing them all the year round. Once there was a season for West India pines, as for English hothouse fruit; now they come all the year round.

It is the same with everything. Once you hardly ever saw a melon or a tomato; now the working-man eats both. Seasons—you would think that they, at least, need not have feared to be superseded—the very seasons are going out. That is the work mostly of the French. Almost all things—lettuce, potatoes, endive, peas, beans, asparagus, cherries, apricots, peaches—come from France a clear six weeks before the English seasons. Not only that, but when the English season is over the French begins again. It is the same with hard fruit: Californian pears and

Tasmanian apples come when there are none in England. Summarily, the British producer puts his stuff on the market at the precise moment when it is bound to be abundant and cheap; the foreigner grows only for seasons of scarcity, when prices will rule high.

But is not London fringed with market-gardens, you ask? The richest and greediest city of the world might have expected that the choicest luxuries would have been grown at its doors, you think; but apparently it is only the bulkier and coarser and cheaper vegetables that those shadowy wains take up every night to Covent Garden. Yes, and not all so, you hear, not by a very long way. Potatoes and cabbages and turnips come in by train, too, from Yorkshire and Lincolnshire and the whole country. But for the Londoner market-gardening is a poor business. At the worst he loses his whole crop by frost or drought; at the best he sells it at the very bottom of the prices. Yes, the market-gardens go on, says the green-grocer; but not the market-gardeners.

And with the widest diffusion of supply you find also the already familiar phenomenon of the closest centralisation in distribution. London, in the widest sense, covers nearly half a million acres, and numbers nearly six million souls; out of all that vast province anybody who wants to buy the

best fruit or vegetables must buy them at one particular hour in one particular spot. I know a greengrocer who lives almost within sight of a score of market-gardens, but none of them will sell him a cabbage. He must buy their cabbages at Covent Garden, seven miles away, at five o'clock in the morning.

To that rule there is hardly an exception. My suburban friend gets a few early peas, cucumbers, and tomatoes from a neighbouring curate, and strawberries thrice daily in the season from a station down the line. The best greengrocers in London will have peas and strawberries twice daily in the season. But for the rest, the centralisation is hard enough on the greengrocer, who must always begin at four or so, days which often do not end till ten at night, and on Saturdays — Sundays, rather — not till one or later. And the combined effect of diffused supply and centralised distribution is the inevitable one that in fruit and vegetables London is one of the worst fed cities in the world. Quantity is there, and great variety, but not quality. Who has not marked the sweetness of a plum plucked off a wall or a turnip eaten raw in its native field? You put that down, it may be, to the surroundings — the sun and the free air and the honest toil of grubbing up the turnip and peeling it with your knife. But

the truth is that vegetables and fruit deteriorate in flavour from the very moment of plucking. The cabbage you eat for dinner to-night has been cut twenty-four hours, and even the patient cabbage will not stand that. The world sends London its best, and London eats it at its worst.

Take another trade—provisions. Here is the same spectacle—London sponging on the world. Your butter comes from Brittany, your eggs from Denmark, your ham from Illinois, your cheese from Canada. Only in bacon—as against the maize-fed American article—and in choice kinds of cheese which depend on a particular pasture, can England hold her own. One of the largest, I suppose, of the provision businesses in London, and certainly one of the best, sells forty tons of butter weekly—89,600 lb.—and not a single ounce of it is British. Why? Partly because British butter that is made for sale is almost always made badly—which is an answer belonging to another question—and partly because Great Britain is behind both Brittany and Ireland in industrial organisation. For it is remarkable that the modern evolution of this trade makes not fewer middlemen, but more. In Ireland the butter passes through the hands of the cowkeeper who milks, the creamery which churns, the wholesale dealer who buys and works all up together

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again and brings the butter to London, the retail dealer who sells it, and the customer who eats it — five hands. In Brittany it is the same without the creamery. They say that the three or four profits, being made on a great bulk of trade, are not more than equal to one retail profit of old days. But whether that be so or not, it seems certain that the key of the position is the wholesale dealer. What the public wants is not so much high quality as uniform quality. If a housewife gets butter of two qualities she is certain to find fault with one of them, even though both be good. Now cows vary and dairymaids vary; therefore uniformity can only be attained by working great quantities together and working by machinery. It is the old story: the wider the field of supply the narrower the channels of distribution.

It is the same with eggs. The Danish dealer collects them from the poultry-keeper, stamps each single egg with his trade-mark and a mark of origin — if it turns out bad the poultry-keeper who supplied it is fined 3s. 3¾d. — sorts them according to sizes, packs them in wood-shavings, 1,200 to a case, and delivers them to the dealer in London three days old. Some, no doubt, have been laid longer; but then so have many home-hatched eggs before they get on to the market. Still, I have met men in London who have actually hatched chickens

from Danish eggs — only three out of eleven, it is true ; but considering the shaking of the journey, that is a very good guarantee of freshness.

And then you must remember that London — and especially moneyed London — does not like its eggs quite new laid — just as, often, it does not like its butter without a little animal fat. The upper and middle classes, generally eating their food with sauces and relishes, find a quite new-laid egg or quite pure butter — flavourless. It is the working-man, he only, who walks a mile to a place where he can get an egg still warm from the hen ; because he knows, and he eats his food pure. The well-to-do working-man, to my palate, keeps the best table of anybody in London.

CHAPTER V

WINE

WE all knew Blackfriars Bridge Station, and we all know the shell of it that remains. But I wonder how many even of the people that rumble through its echoes a dozen times a-week know that they are passing over 600,000 bottles of champagne.

It feels rather like seeing a ghost when you come out again to the bit of platform after many years. There is just a tiny patch of it left, giving on to nothing: you might be on a cliff overhanging an ocean with pulsing trains for rollers. The offices behind the platform are utterly alone in the thick of London. Therein sit the quiet commanders of trucks and goods engines, and order hither and thither champagne enough to intoxicate the whole population of any city, save London, in the whole British Empire.

Think of 600,000 bottles! I do not know how far they would stretch in the direction of the moon; but you may take it that there is

enough champagne in this one cellar under Blackfriars Bridge Station to give a glass to every adult in London. While, if it all belonged to you, it would take you, drinking a bottle a-day, over 1600 years to get to the end of it.

Among hydraulic lifts and cranes you go down into the cellar. By dim gas-jets you see a narrow gridiron of passages leading in every direction; the houses that make the streets are all cases of champagne. Cases piled up to the roof, their white sides gleaming pallidly in the half-light — here a block of Moët & Chandon, a terrace of Veuve Clicquot, an alley of Perrier Jouet, a broken suburb of Pommery. Every single case has its name branded on it, and also its own stencilled number. Not one can be lost; and when one particular number is demanded it must be found in its proper street and taken out into the cramped roadway, and then all its deranged fellows built up again: which gives you an idea of the enormous unsuspected toils that go on about and above and below you every day in London.

This storage of champagne is the symbol of quite a new change in the wine trade. Less than twenty years ago the cellar stood empty. In those days the wine merchant bought what he thought he could sell, paid the duty, brought it home, kept it until he sold it; if there was any sudden

demand beyond the capacity of his cellar, he sent over to France for what was wanted, and the demander had to wait until it came. But when the duty on sparkling wines went up from 2s., first to 6s., then to 7s. 6d., it was not so easy for the merchant to pay the Customs people out of hand and wait till the wine was sold to get his money back.¹ So the wine was stored in bond, either at Dover or at Blackfriars. It was found, moreover, that champagne kept in a temperature of 58° to 60° matured faster than it did in the cold cellars of Epernay. Finally, there arose a firm of carriers (G. & I. Porter) which did to the wine trade exactly what Cook & Son have done for passengers.

They bring the wine — or brandy, if you like; it is all one to them — away from the vineyard, and store it anywhere — Calais, Boulogne, La Rochelle — where cellarage is cheap. It is not theirs, you understand, but the merchant's who bought it; they carry and store it for him. But if he wants it suddenly, instead of sending all the way to Epernay or Cognac or wherever it may be, he lets the carrier know what he wants, and across and up from Calais it comes in a couple of days;

¹ As a matter of fact, the war, which proved to be the tragedy of George Steevens's career, has at this moment (1900) sent the duty flying to no less a sum than 8s. 6d. — ED.

the carrier clears it at the Customs House, and the merchant has only to sell it to the customer. This carrier system saves time and trouble and — as the carriers, like Cooks, give better terms than a small individual — money too. Not a single day passes but this firm¹ brings across the Channel orders — anything from a dozen bottles to 40,000 — for a score of different merchants. The wine you drank last night came neither from London nor from its native vineyard; the chances are that this day last week it was lying in a cave at Calais or under Blackfriars Bridge Station.

Yet another change lies in the rise of the big cash houses, which issue periodical price-lists; you know them, of course. The old style of merchant, giving all but unlimited credit to most of his customers, kept the prices floating that he might recoup himself for the outlying of his money. But now, with the price-lists disseminated everywhere, the lowest cash price tends to become the normal price. The small merchant — especially in the provinces — finds that his customers only come to him for odds and ends to supplement their London orders, and then complain that he, giving credit, asks a higher price than the big merchant who exacts cash. In time the little man will die out of the wine trade, as already he is beginning to die out of everything.

If, therefore, you want to see a big cellar, with 40,000 dozen bottles or so to inflame your imagination, go to one of the large wholesale dealers. Deep down under the by-streets about Mark Lane or Eastcheap are streets and stairways, corners and squares, all built of bottles. There you will find yet another example of the perpetual changes of London—the most conservative of capitals—that metamorphoses itself from day to day under your very eyes.

You learn with a chill shock that cellars are no longer expected to be dirty. You may see the old style and the new without travelling more than ten yards underground. To the first you go down a sort of hatchway out of a flagged yard. You bend under an arch, turn into a vault, and go down a narrow sloping passage with a stumbling-step at the bottom. You tread in pools of water; ooze drips from the sweating roof on to your hat. With it droop stalactites of cobweb and mildewed fungus; and they grow over the bottles till these look like rows of black tumours. In the new cellar everything is as clean underground as it is in the manager's office above. You go down stable staircases with sharp corners; you walk on concrete; a slight dampness on the wall attracts instant attention. The bottles in the bins flash in the electric light; the rows of dignified pipes

at rest on their scantlings of ship's timber are almost as well dusted as your furniture. Indeed, there is no room for mildew in such a cellar; space is as dear under the City as on its surface. So that a bin is let into every recess of the huge pillars of masonry that support the tiers of offices and the web of by-streets above. In time the wine-town with its myriad battalions of dumb, reclining bottles — so wealthy, so potent, yet so still and silent — becomes almost eerie. You pass from aisle to aisle, up a staircase, round a corner, under an arch, down a staircase: it seems endless — a new submerged city supplementary to the one you know. Now a heavy door suggests an emergency exit to a basement, a lift and dim skylight show we are under a street; and always through the gaps in the bins you see the caves and towers of brickwork — the firm-set feet of London.

The place is full of newly invented plant. There is a vat wherein twenty people could sit down to dine, with pumps and hose to work it; there is a tiny thing like a brass taper-holder that a push of a button transforms into a wand tipped with electric light for examining the cleanness of barrels and jars. Electric light, in truth, has been a godsend to cellarmen; they can now keep the bins both light and cool. Here, too, is the newest corking-machine — a creature which takes the cork

in iron fingers, squeezes it along a slot to a round end over the bottle that compresses it to the right size, then shoots down with a bolt from above — and behold the closure is hermetical. There are still thousands of people not yet old who remember when the wine was bottled at home — a week chosen when there would be no callers to announce or guests to wait on, and the butler and footman very dirty in the morning and dirty and tired in the afternoon, and perhaps the least bit inarticulate at night. It was not hurried over, that time of bottling.

Everything changes — the very vintages die and new ones rise up and usurp their places. Even I have drunk '47 port, though unworthily, and '74 champagne; but now they are well-nigh impossible either to buy or to drink. Yet port and champagne maintain themselves sturdily in the new age, and fear not the challenge of whisky. They subsist of all qualities, too. Dessert port must still be good, though a degenerate age prefers to remain above the table; champagne this generation now drinks from the beginning of dinner to the end. On the other hand, the housewife who treats herself to an occasional bottle of wine buys cheap port; the poor and pretentious buy cheap champagne. Sherry is all but dead, however, and white claret of good vintages still holds it own;

the consumption of Burgundy is increasing. The one endures, the many change and pass. Vintages perish and whole brands decay; but Wine endures for ever.

CHAPTER VI

THE MAJESTY OF THE LAW

It may be a certificate of character, it may be a confession of shame, but I had never been inside the Law Courts in my life. They stand, as you know, in the heart of London. Along Fleet Street rolls roaring the City's life-blood — merchants and manufacturers, tradesmen and clerks, artisans and labourers. The Law Courts exist to keep all these jostling units in their due relation. Turn into them out of the roar — and you are instantly in another air, another age, another life.

Outside, the City sweats in the sun; in these dim corridors it is quite cool. Outside, the City yells for its daily bread; here the acutest cry of self-interest or passion scarcely rises above a muffled whisper. Outside, the very building lofty and large and uncouthly Gothic; but when you enter one of the Courts of Appeal you find yourself in quite a small, unembellished room. On the bench, at its opposite end, sit three judges, one facing directly towards you, another turning a little in-

wards, the third frankly displaying a rotund profile. On the benches before them — you cannot help recalling your school-days — sit about twenty men, some in wigs and gowns, some in plain black coats. All cherish documents on stout paper; all keep their faces decorously composed; all turn gravely towards the back of a wig and gown which appears to be whispering confidences to the three judges. Presently one of them leans forward and appears to address the front of the wig and gown. You see a strong jaw working and strong brows gripping together over his eyes: at one moment he appears to smile; but you hear no words. Some sound there is, but it seems to pervade the room, not from any human mouth, but exuding from everywhere. You might fancy it the whisper of impersonal abstract justice.

The naked walls, the hushed and moveless audience, the awful sphinxes on the bench, the wordless voice that is rather than speaks — all is far more solemn than any church. It might be the Court of Rhadamanthus, judging ghosts. You have just eaten beef and salad and driven in a hansom cab, yet that and all the concrete world seem a million miles away.

You step out, longing for the footfall of a cat and in terror lest the swinging door should creak. The next court is exactly the same. Another bare

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room, three precisely similar judges on the bench, precisely similar rows of black-backed figures focussed on a similar rampant wig and gown. This one, in a voice compact of drowsiness, which lies densely over the whole court, appears to be giving a lecture, illustrated by a plan hung upon the wall. "This, m' lords," he drones, "was in 1864, and in 1865 he used to shoot over this property, and——" Suddenly the centre judge springs into life: his eyes sparkle and his ears prick like a terrier's. "What did he get?" he asks feverishly. "Snipe, I suppose. Any grouse?" "No, no, no, m' lord," responds counsel soothingly; "no grouse. Perhaps a few snipe, but no grouse. Returning to my point, m' lords——" And m' lord returns to somnolence. But it was a touch of nature, and you go on to the next court less embarrassed by being a human man of the year 1899.

But the next court would in any case have turned embarrassment to laughter. Here again is the same judge on the bench, except that there is but one of him, the same solicitors and clerks, the same wig and gown in possession of the court. But here there is a difference: the place is populated partly with incarnations of the law and partly with people. In the witness-box stands a working man—grey-bearded, with but one hand. The

barrister is supposed to be cross-examining him ; but really he is addressing his questions to a row of seats at the right-hand side of the court, where sits the jury. There is nothing exceptional about the jury ; they are twelve average Londoners. But just because they are average Londoners in a place like this, you have much ado to keep yourself from screaming aloud. Up above sits Rhadamanthus ; the counsel is not of this world, but a wig and a mask of nose and mouth and chin ; the dimness and the rustling echoes are pure underworld. And amid it all here sit a dozen London shop-keepers, a little self-important, a little bored, a little scared — one tall with a brown beard down his waist-coat, one tiny with red whiskers and a bald head, one nursing his paunch, one picking his teeth. Here is the absolute average man, taken from his native omnibus. One alone would have been less extraordinary ; it takes twelve to be so average ; and never, never in the omnibus could twelve be so average as when brought here to play a part in the processes of the shades.

You think this far-fetched and strained, to make a point : well, go into the courts and see. It is the most dramatic, the most farcical, sight in London — two utterly different worlds jostling each other, engaged in the same task, yet remaining utterly apart. Go into a court where a woman is giving

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evidence. At the very sight of a woman you gasp, for among sphinxes you have forgotten in half an hour that people in the world outside are divided by sex. Probably, if you want to be matter-of-fact, the judge on the bench has a wife of his own; he dresses himself in a white waistcoat, sits down opposite her at table, and carves a saddle of mutton; after that, may be, plays picquet with her; after that goes—— No, I cannot say it. Look at his lordship, and it is contempt of court even to think such things. Under the awful majesty of the wig there are eyes to see whether you change colour, a nose to scent the truth, a mouth to absolve or damn. And the lady in the witness-box is putting hair-pins into her hair. No: the two are not thinkable in the same sentence.

The two worlds jostle, but do not mix. Their very language is different. The witness embarks cheerfully upon the generals and approximates of his ordinary conversation. "Now be very careful," says the lawyer, "and remember, you are on your oath." To him it is nothing that people should be on their oaths; for him, professionally, it is the normal attitude of mankind. But the poor devil of a witness will spend just one-hundred-thousandth part of an ordinary life on his oath; the position is new and vague and mysteriously hedged with human and divine menace.

He must extemporise for himself new standards of accuracy, new acceptations of words, a new state of mind.

“Now, be very careful.” The witness gives a little jerk of his whole body, with a half-formed hope that due carefulness will enter into him thereby. “You say you are pretty sure?” “Yes, sir.” “What do you mean by” — with merciless emphasis and a disdainful drawl — “pretty sure?” “Well, sir” — he begins with a smile of propitiating geniality; and behold the judge’s wig revolves in his direction, and the terrific eyeballs roll upon him, and he freezes into terror, and desperately ransacks an empty brain for criteria of certainty. “Well, sir, I mean — pretty well certain — nearly sure — well, quite sure.” “Nearly sure and quite sure are not exactly the same thing. Now, which” — in the tone of one who investigates a new specimen in an aquarium — “which do you mean? Are you as sure as you are that you are standing in that witness-box?” He wipes his forehead and makes the plunge; “Yes, sir.” “Ah!” And that “ah!” sets the wretch wondering whether it will be fourteen years in Portland or only eternity in perdition.

No: law is not for such as you and I. They say we make the law, but that is sheer nonsense. The law is something apart and supernatural; we

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do not understand it, and it does not understand us. We respect it, and fear it most consumingly. Out in Fleet Street the omnibuses and the eating-houses and the people are all the raw material of the law, if only they had the misery to know it. You buy a halfpenny newspaper for the cricket scores and go out for a walk with your intended bride: the law is controlling you all the time. Deviate a hair's-breadth and they will have you — those heart-quaking beings with the strange language and no backs to their heads.

Happily few of us ever see the law in the courts, in that ghostly and appalling majesty. If we did we should either abolish it for its grotesqueness or else never move hand or foot or tongue for the numb terror of it.

CHAPTER VII

THE UNSTABLE POOR

“JENNY’S ’and?” said Mrs. Peckover, in her rich, jolly voice, as she hauled forward her youngest but two for inspection. “Why, she was bringin’ ’ome a bottle of that oil stuff and fell down and cut it; the doctor’s taken off the top of a finger, and there’s a cut across the palm, like. It reminds me of that day when Johnny knocked his eye and you put on beef-steak. Lor’, what a time that was! If this yard could only talk! Ha, ha! D’ you remember when little Billy died and I says, ‘I’ve lost one mother, and found another in ’er’ — meanin’ you, now? Ha, ha, ha! All the things that’s ’appened in this yard! it’s as good as a pantomime.”

It seemed just as well that some one was there to take the hilarious view of it. The yard is a forlorn little patch of slum left untouched by the flooding tide of modern improvement. Behind the big, clean, red-bricked hospital, past the big, clean, red-bricked blocks of flats, just before the clean,

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red-bricked ranges of model dwellings, you take a turn past the still damp mortar of the clean, new public-house — and you are in the yard.

At first sight you see nothing. It is just a yard. The pavement is sloppy cobbles; on the right is a shed, floored and walled and roofed with coal-dust, and tenanted by empty coal-waggons; on the left stand other coal-waggons; above both rise the clean, dead-red walls of the modern improvements. You would suppose that the place was used for keeping waggons — and a very good place for it too. Then you suddenly perceive that it is inhabited.

In a dirty plank hoarding you see a couple of doors, and above the doors greasy-looking brown walls with windows. Go through the first: this is Davis's. You come into Davis's garden, yard, drying-ground, and stable combined. A gaudy scarlet van, empty and idle, exhorts you to try Davis's safety-oil. Before you can see more you must dive under a couple of lines of damp washing; then on the right, from a plank-built loose-box as big as a bathing-machine, appears the friendly head of a well-thriven bay cob; on the left, in a shed as big as a public telephone closet, three dry and coal-dusty ducklings brood over their wrongs.

Between the two is the front door, or, to be

accurate, the doorway. On one side you see a scullery and on the other a room with a table set out; both are quite bare, and about the size of the loose-box. Beyond them is a large chamber, which may have been meant for a laundry; by the half-light you see that it is now furnished with a copper, railed in, a wooden bench or two, piles of old clothes, a file of mouldering bills and dirt. It appears now to be used as a drawing-room. A heavy-looking man lurks in the back-ground; there comes out to meet us a girl of eighteen, with delicate features, large, clear blue eyes, a skin like the enamel of Sèvres china, and she has a light blue print gown unfastened at the throat. One of the visitors is her landlady and the donor of unnumbered services to the family: she meets her with easy familiarity, without a trace either of respect or of affection, and enters upon a fluent sketch of the present position and future prospects of the Davises. Alf, remarking with a genial grin that "there ain't much luck when you're out of work," subsides into his seat and silence.

Davis is by trade a seller of lamp-oil and fire-wood, which hardly seems a promising industry at eighty in the shade. No; he ain't doing much; it's too 'ot; then there's this penny-in-the-slot gas, so trade ain't what it used to be. Doesn't he take to something else in the summer — vegetables

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or flowers or somethink? No; he ain't doing nothink else; did think of soap and soda, but then yer see — this with insinuating emphasis; the rent, by the way, is overdue — that takes money to begin in, that does. Meantime mother does charing at the hospital, and gets 14s. a-week. Fanny's apprenticed to the underclothing. Mary and Nellie — who is the speaker — used to go out with vans of oil and firewood; Mary was married and had a baby at sixteen, and Nellie at eighteen. Alf and Bill are both married and both out of work.

Nina is at home keeping house while mother chares; by the same token she is just going out to amuse herself — another china-tinted girl of about fourteen. Then there are the two little ones; they are duly hauled in from playing in the yard; they need pocket-handkerchiefs and combs and soap and hair-cutting; through the dirt and the yellow curls and tawdry Vandyke collars and coloured blouses you can dimly discern the family beauty. The gross income of the Davis family, you gather, is 14s. a-week, out of which they have to pay 16s. for rent.

Wretched Davises, you cry. In Christian London can such misery be? Wait a minute and hear what Mrs. Peckover has to say of them. "That Davis! An imp, I call him — a little imp. See him go out with a flower in his coat and a

cigar in his mouth, as if he'd just bought the yard. Mrs. Davis, whatever 'er faults may 'ave been (I will say that for 'er): she always was an 'ard-working woman. To see 'im Thursdays going with her to the hospital to get 'er money! And for Sunday breakfast they'll 'ave 'addocks, and bacon and eggs and sausages and jam, all on the table together. Yes, they do."

But how in the world does he do it? He has two pairs of lodgers — his daughter's husband is one — and thus makes perhaps 10s towards his rent; he never pays except in extremity; but what else? Does he bet? "Bet? To 'ear 'im talk you'd think there never was such a thing done. Praches about it, 'e does and drink, too; 'e's above all that, 'e is. 'Im in a public, indeed! Where 'e gets 'is money, I can't fancy. What I say: schemin' pays better than workin'. He always was a mystery, that man — a reg'lar imp, I call 'im."

And a mystery Davis remains. His family and he live in a kind of lavish squalor — filth about them, good clothes on their backs, good food filling their bellies. They are quite happy and self-satisfied. Is he a burglar in his spare time, or an outside dealer in the Kaffir market, or a beggar, or what? Nobody knows but himself; he is one of the unsolved riddles of London.

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Next — through a gate in the boarding fastened by an ingenious pulley with the half-brick of the neighbourhood for its weight — come the Snellings. Snelling's past is a typical romance of labour. In old days, before the clean red brick washed away the courts and alleys, there were in this district dining-rooms for working-men and a *crèche* for children. In the deserted dining-room, one afternoon many years ago, Snelling was discovered with his hands on the table and his head in his hands, sobbing. With difficulty he told his tale: his wife had gone off with his brother, the lodger; he had sent his two children to the workhouse — what else could a lone working-man do? — and the sight of the kids in the *crèche* was too much for him. In the course of years his grief healed — it heals more quickly in the class which has to grapple daily with destitution than elsewhere — and he married again an upper-housemaid, with two under her — a fine match — and brought his children from the workhouse.

Now Snelling sits in his parlour, stretching before him two great feet, full of rheumatic gout. He has lost his job with the vestry after nine years. His wife, no longer a dandy gentleman's servant, is small and pinched: he drinks and bangs her about. She is a bad housewife, like most gentlemen's servants. She cannot go out to work, for

though the eldest pair of children are one in a place and the other married, she has had half-a-dozen more of her own. One was born dead; the others, down to the grimy-nosed baby in the third-hand pram, are "playing" — which means listless loafing — in the yard.

And how does Snelling live? You can guess from the look of his room. Children's garments litter it over, and the furniture, though shabby, is sufficient; but beyond a couple of empty cream-jars and a faceless clock, there is no sign of an ornament. They live by putting things away.

But "I'm not going to starve," says Snelling sturdily, and probably he will not, being a good labourer and a decent fellow, who pets rabbits when he is off drink. When you go on to Mrs. Peckover's — she meets you at the door, a real front door that opens, as she wipes soap-suddy arms on her apron — the note of defiance to fortune is cheerier still. Her man has just all but died, and she reckons time by the diseases and deaths of her children; but repine — not Mrs. Peckover! Her husband is a retailer of coal, and owns many vans. Her mantelpiece is covered with china knick-knacks, her walls with framed prints and enlarged and coloured photographs; on the table are books, and a heap of pink gauze that will appear next Sunday as the children's hats.

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Never a Sunday, you may be sure, but the Peckovers dine well and put on every garment clean. Furthermore, there has been no baby for six years, and the eldest son has just gone into his natural sphere of usefulness as an errand-boy. You see, there is practically no such thing as apprenticeship in London now; work-shop space is too valuable. The boys from the yard have no chance of learning a trade; they must go and get what unskilled work they find, with almost the certainty of being out of work half their lives.

Next door is Mrs. Morgan, the last inhabitant. She is an elderly widow of lugubrious demeanour, in a plain but spotless room, decorated chiefly with antique photographs and the parish magazine. She has nothing to complain of; her children are all at work and fairly steady. One daughter has lately left good service to be married, four months before bearing a dead child; her favourite son, the paragon of the yard, who rose from a bag-boy to barrister's clerk, has also just married — "rather a stranger," as she says with the air of one who refuses to complain.

That finishes the catalogue of the Yard — the dingy yard cowering among the sunny red brick, a strange recalcitrant backwater of the river of progress. It is all common enough, you say; yet it is typical, too, of London. Typical especially is the

happy-go-lucky Bohemianism that appears to attack all labour that grows in this city. The countryman is apprenticed; and when he learns the trade he comes up to golden London to practise it. His grandchildren, without ambition, loving cheap pleasures and hating regular work, take little jobs as they come, and are transformed, succinctly, into the Yard. Nobody in it knows a trade; there seems no special reason why anybody in it should be able to earn enough to live. Yet there they have lived for ten years, and will most likely live for ten more. Improvement schemes have skipped over the Yard, and so has everything else; it cares nothing for politics or art or trade-unionism or religion or any of the things we suppose to be important — only for the penny-in-the-slot gas-system, for the weather as it affects road-making, the coal sales, or house painting, and for births, marriages, and deaths. Births never-ceasing, marriages early yet anticipated, deaths treading on the heels of births and as lightly regarded — these complete the simple, typical, un instructive saga of the Yard.

CHAPTER VIII

THE UNSTABLE RICH

A WET afternoon in the season — and what could be more disconsolate? Through the weeping glass of the hansom there was no prospect, save soot-blackened, mud-streaming, empty streets. No city looks gay on such a day, but none ever looks so forlornly gloomy as London. In Paris there would be bright colours of advertisement and sheets of looking-glass to relieve the monotone of road and pavement, wall and window. In London, on such a day, even gold and scarlet look grey, and mirrors find no light to reflect withal. In Paris or Berlin or Vienna you would have seen café-fronts, under verandahs, alive with people sipping and puffing the storm away; in London there is a drowned rat of an errand-boy plashing across the street, a well-dressed couple swimming through the closed and cascading window of a brougham — for the rest, nothing. The place might be asleep or dead. In London we are civilised enough to fear a wetting, and barbarous

enough to have no other way of keeping dry but to stay at home.

Presently two cabs appeared together, then three ; and under the cheerless face of the Albert Hall huddled a whole tail of them. Through puddles I went in — and behold ! an Empire ballet in full swing ! Up above were the boxes and circles, familiarly dusky, and the dish-cover roof. But below, the stalls had all disappeared, under a stage floor of yielding planks. All round the floor, and in the middle of it, were little kiosques, bowers of drapery, arbours of drooping silk and muslin in every soft and tender colour known beneath the sun. National ensigns surmounted them, and they were filled and lined and festooned with fabrics and china and bonnets and books and table-napkins and every abstruse kind of bric-à-brac. In and among the kiosques, mostly carrying bric-à-bric also, were scores of beautiful ladies. Only ! why at the Albert Hall instead of in Leicester Square ? Well : it was, as you have guessed, a bazaar in aid of a hospital.

At the first sight of it, who so proud as the Londoner ? What other city on earth could show such women ? Well-grown, well-nourished, well-groomed, well-dressed, and supremely beautiful, they made such a show as could be seen nowhere else out of dreams. Paris could not approach it ;

Vienna perhaps would come nearest. But if the ladies of Vienna are as well-nourished, well-groomed, well-dressed, they are less divinely tall and, to the British eye at least, less fair. The surprise, almost the shock, of the spectacle was the height of the wealthy young women of London. Everybody knows some very tall young women; but here there seemed no short ones. They seemed not merely far taller than their mothers, but much taller than their brothers also. I had always persuaded myself that five-foot-nine was a convenient and seemly middle-height for a man, but among these sweeping goddesses I was a dwarf. To be tall nowadays a girl must fall hardly short of six feet. I suppose it comes of more exercise in the open air, together with good food; certainly the poorer classes, whether in town or country, do not show the same phenomenon. Unless samplers and walks with a governess should come in again, we shall be overrun in a generation with a breed of giantesses, and what will man do then, poor thing?

As for beauty, everybody has his own standard: and faultless profiles, fine eyes, brilliant hair are happily not so uncommon. But in the last perfection of colouring and texture of skin these beauties were supreme. Paint and powder may be the vogue, especially among those whose complexions

these very things have ruined; yet most showed cheeks like rose-petals. An eye greedy for faults might find them in the perchance over-straight lines of the modern figure; the faces were beyond criticism.

A little cold-blooded, you will be thinking, this appraisal of gracious ladies at a work of charity, as if they were horses at a show. But that was just the distressing point of view that ten minutes in the place forced you to take. It was — you distressfully perceived — it was a rank-and-beauty-and-fashion show, and little else. You did not come to help the great hospital; a cheque would have done that more conveniently. You paid a guinea (or whatever it was) to look at the most beautiful women in London, and, if you had guineas enough, it was well worth it. If you wanted more for your money there was a duke upstairs in the white linen jacket of a bar-tender, selling American drinks. A duke in a white linen jacket selling cocktails — and they talk of abolishing the House of Lords! And I wonder what his grandfather would say if he could hear of it.

The public paid to see the show; the assistants — there were at least twice as many assistants this afternoon as there were public — came apparently to amuse themselves. Playing at being a waitress, a shop-girl, a flower-girl, picnicking a

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couple of days at the Albert Hall — it was immense fun. It must be said that they did the business quite as well as their prototypes. They hawked up and down, hauled the doubtful purchaser to their stalls, pressed baby linen irresistibly on the bachelor. They were never still and never silent. They met refusal with insistence, excuse with repartee. They were never at a loss, never disconcerted, and for an extra guinea would fasten your carnation into your buttonhole themselves. And I wonder what their grandmothers would have said to that.

At one stall I saw two natives of India, brown, bottomless-eyed creatures, with a sort of self-contained pride in their most obeisant demeanour. And, ye gods, what were they thinking of it all? I tried to imagine a Maharajah selling attar and betelnut or a Begum hawking lotuses. I moved away from the neighbourhood, and wished that whoever had brought those natives of a dignified country had left them at home.

Rank and beauty auctioning itself to impertinent curiosity — but in the cause of charity. Still you could not expect the Indians to take count of that. Indeed, once that is said, could you expect the inhabitants of any well-ordered city to take count of it? Consider. Here are the hospitals of London — an absolute necessity to a civilised city. On

them depends the education of our physicians and surgeons; we cannot possibly do without them. The hospitals afford the only relief in grave sickness to the very poor, the best relief to everybody. And not a single patient in most of them ever pays a fee, and all of them but two are dependent for their existence on charity.

If you told these things to an intelligent stranger from India he would laugh at you. This the greatest city in the world, and it leaves its greatest need to chance? Are the patients grateful? he would ask. No, you would have to reply; they look on the care they get as their right. Is it good for them to do that? No, you would have to say; it would be better for them to pay, if only a penny a-week. Are the hospitals very rich? On the contrary, they are nearly all nearly always in debt. Then they are starved? They are starved, and yet, relying on outbursts of charity, they sometimes launch into reckless and unnecessary expenditure. Then your hospital system, the intelligent Indian might be moved to remark, is a combination of pauperism and mendicancy. It is a combination of pauperism and mendicancy, you would have to reply, but it is not a system. Is it worthy of the greatest city in the world? It certainly would not be found anywhere else.

The dialogue would leave you humiliated, but it

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would help the Indian to understand the Albert Hall. He would enjoy himself vastly, observing our way of maintaining hospitals. He would reflect that the preparation of the floor alone cost £1000, without mentioning the decorations and the band and the value of the time of the singers and actors, and of the assistants, which perhaps is the lightest item. He might overhear one beauty asking another the price of a glove-box, and the reply, "It's marked one pound five, but you can have it for the five without the pound." He might notice towards the end of the evening towels of the finest quality selling for ten shillings a dozen, and hats from Paris going for half-a-crown, because the purchaser had not three shillings.

His philosophic mind might arrive at the conclusion that the hospital would have benefited more if everybody had given cash instead of goods or time or decorations. "But then," he would soliloquise, "I should have missed the pleasure of seeing how idle and indecorous is this thing they call London Society."

CHAPTER IX

THE VARIOUS ASPECTS OF A MODERN SUNDAY

I WAS privileged the other day to see a Frenchman land in London for the first time at Holborn Station, in the middle of a Sunday afternoon. Laden with hand luggage, he struggled out on to the Viaduct; of course, there was no cab. He looked eagerly for his first sight of London — then checked and stared, with blank eyes and open mouth. It was plain that he half-wondered whether he had not gone mad. Well he might. He had probably heard stories of the roaring rush and energy of London, which strikes a Parisian much as a Londoner is struck in turn by New York. And he saw a desolation. Nothing but the blind shop-windows, the silent house-fronts, the empty asphalt of Holborn Viaduct. Not a face at a window, not an open door, not a footstep along the street. The one dwindling omnibus towards the Circus might be the last vehicle carrying away the last inhabitants of London. The City might have been utterly empty — only lifeless buildings left standing, and all population fled or dead.

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The City on Sunday had never struck me as strange before. But a moment from the foreigner's point of view and you see that it is among the wonders of the world. There is nothing in the least like it in this hemisphere. Go into any other capital on Sunday — even at the height of the summer's suburban excursions — and it is fuller, brighter, livelier than in the week. Go into the heart of London, and it is like a city stricken with a pestilence. Yesterday and to-morrow the street would be jammed tight with traffic of men and goods ; every shop and office implied a procession of comers and goers, the pavements vomited torrents of people, heads forward, eyes strained, intent only on the one business. The City roared and quivered and maddened with life. To-morrow it will be so again. To-day, in the centre of the greatest city in the world, you cannot buy food or drink : you cannot even find a cab or train to take you away from it. You might be in a desert. In a street that focusses the business of the world you stare at closed doors and still windows where only paper-clad boxes of samples look over the whitened lower half at the intruder. You can stand without a single living thing in sight, and bend your ears in vain to catch the lightest sound. When you walk, your boots thud and ring like a steamer's

engines ; when you halt, you could hear the flower drop out of your button-hole.

I had often heard that Sunday was the only day on which you can see London, and going up one morning to look for any bits of antiquity I might encounter, I found it was so indeed. On Sunday London takes on a new perspective. Its most prominent features — as in duty bound — are the churches. On week-days you pass them without knowing they are there ; on Sunday, even though they are shut, you note them as landmarks of the time when people lived in the City. On Sunday you observe that there is a statue of William IV. opposite London Bridge, and experience an unfamiliar prompting to go up the Monument. You had always looked on the Tower as a bit of somewhere else that had somehow strayed on to ground that might have been profitably bestowed on offices and warehouses and wine-cellars ; to-day its green-shadowed terrace, the rhubarb growing in the moat, the fat old guns that grin benevolently on the Dutch steamer swinging to the tide — to-day you can look at them without fellow-citizens on your feet and in your stomach, seeming, sure enough, to be the principal things to look at.

Over the Tower Bridge comes a loose but unceasing string of foot-passengers. Not going out of London, like the rest of the world, they pour

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steadily into the emptiness, which yet is never a whit fuller. You noticed the same on London Bridge: while half the town is heading out, the other half—the neckerchiefed and feather-flying half—is heading in. Towards what? You fall in with them along the Minories, which is full of people, though twenty yards away Vine Street and America Square are dumb as a sacked village in an invaded country. At Aldgate the crowd parts—half turn east, the other half go on down Houndsditch. A dozen steps after them and you realise that London is not so dead as it seemed. Half the shops are wide open; the predatory beaks of Jews peer out of the doors; the street is full of a vaguely promenading crowd. As you go on it thickens about the old-clothes shops; seeing a yet thicker crowd, you turn off to the right, in the hopes of at least a Punch and Judy show. You emerge into Middlesex Street, with Wentworth Street beyond. And—good Lord! ——

Good Lord! who said London was empty on Sunday? Here are two streets wedged quite tight with men and women. Here is a combination of the rush for pit seats on a Gaiety first night, a race meeting, and an Eastern bazaar. You cannot move for the people clogging your elbow; you cannot hear for the yells of auctioneers on barrows; you can hardly see for the dazzle of colours.

Half a mile away is the still deserted City — and here! Between the two rows of barrows the thousands of marketers just move: they are in no hurry, and can keep watchful eyes and ears clamped on the chances of bargaining. Without exaggeration — the reality of the astounding scene sends Exaggeration reeling — there is everything here that retail sellers can sell. Everything cheap, everything bad. Every kind of garment and fabric is here, and towels and brushes and combs and jewelry and hair-pins. Trousers festoon the streets in hundreds of pairs. “’Ere y’ are!” yells a man from a box on top of a stall: “this pair — noo — two bob, eighteen pence, fourteen, thirteen, one and a ’alf, shillin’ — ’ere y’ are!” — and, as he flings them to a pale-eyed gawk in the street, a heavy-fringed, aproned girl leaps after them to get the money. The boy holds them over his stomach and looks vaguely towards his toes: thus are they tried on, paid for, and taken away. He stops next where two rival salesmen in their shirts are yelling each other down.* Frantically they catch up waistcoats and jackets from below: furiously they drag them on. Then, standing in the very article — “’Ere y’ are — ’alf a soot — ’alf-a-crown, two bob for ’alf a soot — blanky noo — two bob for the blanky ’alf soot, and yer can’t get it for blanky less.” Next door a merchant not

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less energetic appeals only to butchers. Over his clothes he is adorned in a blue jean smock and apron, which he will strip off and sell for a dollar and a 'alf. Every one roars like a book-maker. The rasping yells fling out in sudden gusts, mingle and jar like a saw on a nail, and rebound from house to house like missiles.

Here you can buy harness, you can buy oil-paintings, you can buy books, lemonade, annotated copies of the Workmen's Compensation Bill, vegetable marrows four a-penny all boiled in vinegar, herrings from the barrel, pine-apple from the tin, and—chase me for my feathers!—millinery. You can be weighed at Somebody's Guaranteed Grand National Scales and probe the wonders of the cinematophone. In the very middle of the jammed road totters an old gentleman with a tray full of shirt studs; a burly fellow genially cleaves the press by waving a bullock's liver.

Yes, beyond mistake you have found London on Sunday, and also you have found what you never expected—more than a hint of the East. Look up along the line of plain and grimy house-fronts, the windows black and opaque with generations of soot, with only the broken panes transparent. Here and there is a house completely fronted with hanging finery, petticoats, shirts, children's frocks in scarlet and orange and ultramarine. Surely

those flaring colours are not of England, nor yet this town in the open. Nor yet half the people—curved noses and deep lustrous eyes and hairy bunches of features protruding from humped shoulders. Half the people are bargaining over the stalls in a lingo you do not know. The Jew has brought his own Orient along with him into black-skied London.

Also you have found what you believed not to exist—the open-air life of London. It is not confined to the Jew: all the eastward streets are full of Londoners. The working-man in collar and tie, the working-man in silk neckerchief, the working-man in his working corduroy—he is everywhere, taking his pipe and his ease in the street. A few of the wives are about too—in rusty black bonnets and shawls, with worn bodies and pale faces; observe that the men and the women take their social intercourse quite apart. Only among the young do you see the sexes walking together; for whom else is Bishopsgate Street Without studded with flower-girls? Among the dingy crowd flit like butterflies the gorgeous children of the not-quite-poor. In azure or cherry-coloured satin frocks, white silk stockings, and white satin shoes, these amazing bunches of finery mince to and fro through refuse and sun themselves from dust-bins.

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But the open-air life of London has its strict limit. The veins of strollers, you observe, begin to clot into groups. The groups seem to correspond with the frequent public-houses, and you observe on the broad-faced church clock that it is eight minutes to one. Here is the true emotional moment of London's Sunday. Each little knot sorts itself — cigars and white skirts and stockings opposite the saloon bar, clays and shawls and Jack and Tommy opposite the public, jugs and bottles in their appointed place. The long hand crawls slowly over the five minutes mark; now it is more than half-way to the hour. The loll of elaborate unconsciousness which first screened the waiters gives place to the tense pose of listening. A footstep inside and the raising of a bolt — the door rolls back with a glimpse of somebody in white shirt-sleeves. There is no affectation of uncertainty: every man goes straight forward inside, as ships glide into port. In a twinkling the houses are all full, and before the last man is well in the first comes out wiping his lips with the back of his hand.

CHAPTER X

THE APOTHEOSIS OF DIRT

You might think of a dozen or a hundred bases of distinction between London and other capitals; but you will always come back in the end to the one that struck you first — dirt. London is beyond comparison the dirtiest capital in the world. We suppose ourselves personally the cleanest people in the world, — and so we are. But we need not boast; we are clean only in self-defence, because the city we live in is so immitigably grimy. We allege that London is a sanitary place, well-drained, with a low death-rate. So, for aught I know, it may be, though the looks of its inhabitants belie the statement. But, wholesome or not, it remains filthy — dusty, muddy, sooty, smoky, evil-smelling, sunless at noonday — filthy beyond the filthiness of the rottenest plague-spot in the East. It is the first thing that the arriving foreigner observes, the last thing that the returning Londoner forgets.

This is not for want of gallant efforts to clean

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it; but foul London remains. Foul, moreover, it always will be until somebody invents and enforces a practicable method of consuming smoke. Five million people, when you think of it, must needs produce smoke enough to blacken the sun like a copper kettle. The sun and the air and the trees and the river — and, not content with these, London blackens itself most impartially. Did you ever look out from a railway train over Southwark or Bermondsey — those symphonies in smudge? On the intensest summer day the sky is never more than bluish: under it the landscape is a smoke-grey monotone of low chimneys and house-tops broken only by outcropping smoke-and-reddish board schools. All shapes, all light, all colour you see through a curtain of fine soot. You see it better here than elsewhere only because here the low houses permit a wider prospect; the colour hardly varies over the whole of London. Yet by a happy irony this very soot-veil is the only begetter of London's beauties. It tones down jarring colours and softens crude outlines. Everywhere it palliates ugliness, but along the river it creates loveliness. Here also is space to see its magic. At dawn it reinforces the mist, at sunset it plays the part of cloud. At every hour of day and night it blends, relieves, and graduates ugliness into unerring harmonies of delight.

The Thames is beautiful up-river from London Bridge, but down-river it is also grand. Start from Old Swan Pier and steam down as far as Greenwich. Here at the very beginning is an epitome of the greatness of London. Above you on the left rises London Bridge—the road: gently rounded arches, monumental granite, omnibuses and vans gliding past above the parapet in an endless succession. On the right is Cannon Street bridge—the rail: level surface and upright piers, clanking iron, half-a-dozen great engines snorting on the track at a time. Behind and before you rise warehouses in spreading, precipitous cliff-line. And at your feet swirls mightily the Thames, fouled with a thousand impurities, broken into eddies and billows by a thousand rushing tugs, bearing on the same strong fatherly bosom both London's off-scourings and London's treasure.

As soon as you have come near to rapture at the noise, the energy, the wealth and power within your gaze, there pants up to receive you the penny steamer. Your dilating soul contracts in a second to dry sponge. And is this also London? This ramshackle cockle-shell—is this London's best thanks for the gifts of Father Thames? . . . But forget, if the knife-board seats and the showering smuts will let you, the

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penny steamer; for we enter the Pool of London. The Tower Bridge has spoiled it a little to my mind — not merely by its own intrinsic hideousness, by its disproportion to its surroundings, and the tawdry, castellated affectations that make it look as if it were jealous of the Tower — but also because it breaks the wonderful transformation from the river above London Bridge to the ocean-stream below it. Yet even with the Tower Bridge how great, how romantically suggestive, how soul-expanding is the Pool of London!

Under the suffusing blend of smoke and sunshine, compact yet open, it displays its riches, yet keeps a halo of mystery. The long and seemly face of the Custom House imposes order, the stark stone of the Traitors' Gate and Bloody Tower epitomises the romance of London's past. The stout ships are eloquent of the romance of the present, panting and creaking, discharging the wealth of the Indies and the River Plate, gliding proudly up stream unwearied by numberless leagues through strange waters, stealing softly down the dwindling vista of wharves to tempt fortune in humming ports over the vast expanses beyond. The very line of wharves, the cliffs of the southern shore, are loud with challenge to the fancy. Here are buildings, parts of London, full of Londoners, yet how many of us know as much as the way into

them? They look towards the river, and are a part of it. With their many decks, long lines of half-deadened, fast-closed windows, open doors on every tier disclosing hatchways, faces studded with rust-brown cranes and chains, blocks and tackle, they look almost like colossal ships themselves.

Below the Tower they rise up on the north side also: you pass down a frowning avenue of wharves and warehouses. But always the benign sun-and-smoke clothes them with softness and harmony; it softens their vermilion advertisements to harmony with the tinted azure of the sky and the vague grey-brown of the water. Brutal business built them, to ship and unship, and be as crass and crude as they would, but the smoke turns them into the semblance of sleepy monsters basking by the river they love. Presently the tall sky-line breaks and drops; let in between the monsters appears a terrace of tiny riverside houses, huddled together as in a miniature. There is a tiny tavern with a plank-built terrace rising on piles out of the water, a tiny shop all aslant, a tiny brown house with a pot-belly of a bow-window. It all babbles of Jack and Poll, of crimps and tots of rum, and incredible yarns in the bar-parlour. Next, between the dusky wharves, an Italian church-tower soars up out of a nest of poor houses; the sun catches its white face and transfigures it.

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Then, the dearest sight of all — ships appearing out of the land, fore and main and mizzen, peak and truck, halliards and stays, and men like flies furling topgallant-sails above the roofs of London. As we open the region of the docks we are in a great city of ships — big steamers basking lazily with their red bellies half out of water, frantic spluttering tugs, placid brown-sailed barges, reckless banging lighters — and behind all this, clumps and thickets and avenues of masts and spars and tackle stretching, stretching infinitely on every side. The houses have melted all away, and London is become a city of ships.

Only a moment; now comes a new transformation — a city of forges and engines and chimneys, industrial London. The precipitous wharves, the taper masts, are behind us now; on both banks the buildings crouch low to the water. The horizon recedes, and under the huge vault of cloud and smoke the river appears to widen with it. It is growing dark, too; a breeze whips up the stream. The gold drains out of the haze; the Thames seems to awake and smile less benignly as it runs with a strong purposeful tide; the air is thick and grim. On either side, in winding reaches behind you, low parallels opposite you, dwindling but endless perspectives before you, toil the industries of London. Varnish-works, colour-

works, chain-works, chemical works, rope-works, barge-builders, marmalade-factories — everything. Here is a mere open shed, there the gibbet-like skeleton of an iron ship a-building, there a tangled pile of rubbish with an old boat on the top, opposite a building with serrated roof and squat chimney-stacks at the corners, like a burlesque of the keep of the Tower, in front a dropsied gasometer pointing the way to Woolwich. And everywhere tall chimneys — slim and stubby, plain and tricked, belching, belching black smoke to thicken the austere canopy overhead. All along the river the blackening banks exude noisome stench, twinkle with scarlet pin-points of fire, rattle and clang with the beat of iron on iron. Dirt in your nose and eyes, din in your ears, London closes down on you heavily, yet stirringly. Through this world of dirt, grim and unwearied, looms the greatness as well as the beauty of London.

CHAPTER XI

THE INVENTOR

“TAKE out the Baby and I’ll follow with the Canary.”

So spoke the Inventor, and we hurried downstairs to see the start. We found everybody bending tenderly over the two, putting the last touches to their smartness. The British engineer with a yachting cap over his fair hair, the French engineer in waxed moustache, monocle, and tall hat, the blue-chinned American, the wavy-haired cosmopolitan inventor, were doing all that love could suggest to fit the Baby and the Canary for their outing.

The objects of their affection, radiant with self-satisfaction, stood spick and span amid a litter of bicycles, old wheels, bits of wire, oil-cans, and balks of timber. The Baby was a stout black-and-scarlet phaeton on big artillery wheels with shining brass axles. The Canary was canary-yellow in colour, but otherwise was more like a low dog-cart. Each appeared to have a hand-brake on the driver’s off side; in front, where the reins

ought to be, was a lever with an india-rubber hooter attached; where the shafts ought to be there was nothing; between the hind wheels, under the carriages, hung a couple of queer-shaped metal boxes, whence wires ran mysteriously under the seats.

They opened the doors of the yard and disclosed a back street of inner-suburban London. A dingy row of two-storeyed cottages was on one side; on the other tall bleak factory walls, and building going on. The street between displayed the usual scenery — cobble-stones, a dustman's van, and boys. "'Ere's the motor-cars!" went up a shrill cry. With the words and the first cough of the hooter, doors opened all along the shabby houses, and heads came out of windows above the boxes of sickly geraniums. The local inhabitants have never ceased to wonder at the doings of the strange company of madmen in the factory — madmen from strange countries, one day boisterously happy, the next ready to hang themselves, working three days and nights on end to get out a new carriage, and then deliberately, furiously overworking it till it smashes, filling Camden Town with unknown stinks and sounds and flashes, all in the attempt to drive carriages without horses.

Huh, huh, coughs the Canary; the driver pulls over what looked like the brake — and out she

glides into the back street, over the cobbles, into the wider street beyond. Now for the Baby — the Baby which has never moved a step before. The driver sits down, hoots, and slowly, almost tremulously, pulls over the lever. For a hundredth of a second nothing seems to happen: that child of sweat and racking brains and prayers and oaths — what if she does not move! But the next hundredth of a second brings a deep sigh of satisfaction. She starts gently forward — out she glides over the cobbles, into the next street — the Baby which has never moved a step before.

Now with hideous grunts and a whirr as of wings we shoot out towards Primrose Hill. Every child out of the factory has to run up Primrose Hill her first trip out or be brought back disgraced. Whirr! There is no clatter and no vibration and no smell, for this is an electric machine, not a petroleum-engine; only a pulse and rushing air such as a bird hears. We swoop down on a railway van at the speed of a local train — nearer, twenty yards, five, good Lord — click! The lever comes over, and with a little jump we stop dead. An easy swing and we are round it; whirr again up a hill; down it — I never realised how steep hills were in London and with what sharp turns at the bottom — then click! and we glide from a fly to a crawl. The dial in front of the driver shows

that in the descent of the hill we not only used none of the electric energy stored in our accumulators, but actually increased it.

So we came to Primrose Hill, and the Baby, artillery wheels and all, runs serenely up it like a living thing and checks obediently to walk warily down the incline at the other side. Joyfully all return to the factory, I hungry to see how the thing is done. I suspect I should have understood the explanation better if I knew what an *ampère* is. But they showed me the whole process from beginning to end, and the less I understood it the more magical it seemed.

In one long room were about a score of young men: when I came to look at them I gasped. Instead of eyes in sockets they had great black windows, and instead of noses huge pink snouts like a pig's. I thought I had come into the country of Grimm's fairy tales, till I saw that they wore black goggles against glare and respirators against fumes. These were making accumulators. The first step was a perforated wafer of lead, about the size of an octavo page, in a leaden frame. The men in false eyes and noses were shaving the edges and binding the corners of these, and their tool was burning hydrogen. They seemed to be pricking the lead with a thing like a metal awl, but a jet of flame shot out of it, and the

lead bubbled like sealing-wax. It was like a pen that wrote with fire.

In another room there were men weighing and pounding and kneading a red powder to a paste. This was laid on the leaden wafers, pressed, and laid out to dry. When it was dry the thin grid had become a little plate of hard, yellowish-red cement. Next came a room, full of a smell half vinegar, half grease, rasping nostrils and throat as if with ammonia. There on shelves stood rows and rows of small tanks all full of such plates, plunged in water with serpentine wires dipping into them. When that was done the plates were tawny no longer, but metallic grey. Then they were made into cells and accumulators. The completed thing was an open leaden chest, something of the size and shape of the boxes in which they deliver ginger-beer from vans. Like these, it was divided into many compartments — long deep boxes, each containing a number of the prepared plates. Wires and leaden lugs were connected respectively with the positive and the negative: more men in goggles and snouts were fusing the leaden parts together. This was all done by electricity — a wire on one of the parts to be joined and a wire on the other — a blinding flash and heat so fervent that the separate pieces of lead became henceforth one: when you cut a section it

looked as if it had always been one sheet of metal. The completed battery was taken away to be treated electrically once again, and then it was ready to drive carriages.

It is all common enough to you, perhaps, but to me it was like the den of a wizard. This was not all: there were controllers and motors and armatures — great, heavy spools of wire, they seemed, that take five weeks to wind. Everything in this factory was either makeshift or experiment. Everything was being improved. Alongside of the inferior article which they have to buy from others you saw the model of the new invention, that will take months to manufacture, but then will add 50 per cent to efficiency. And most wonderful of all is a little closet, the size of a porter's box, a cobweb of wires interwoven from floor and walls and ceiling, like the web of a titanic spider. It is full of dials and clockwork indicators and pendulums and delicate balances. Outside it is a sort of rocking plate. On this they put an accumulator, and then shake it to represent the oscillation of an electric carriage, and the instruments — heaven knows how! — register the deterioration of it at the rate of a quarter of an hour's experiment to a day's normal wear and tear. Having made the machine, they lovingly, remorselessly break it down to see what it will stand.

The particular plate, says the Inventor, which is characteristic of his system, develops three times the electrical energy of the best he can get elsewhere. "It took five years," he says, "to arrive at it. Each experiment involved a process of three weeks with constant watching. If I made a small error the second day, I did not know it till the twenty-first; then I began over again. Now I can run a carriage sixty miles with electricity; I can run it thirty miles an hour; I can run it up or down any hill.

"But all that is nothing. That I do only to show what my system can do. All this automobilism is nonsense, a fad, a toy. A man asks me can I run my carriage from Paris to Bordeaux; I answer that if I, or any other man not a lunatic, would go from Paris to Bordeaux, I take the train.

"But look" — and he flung out his hand against the million chimneys of London — "look at this great city. Think of its public carriages, its omnibuses and tramcars, its post-vans and delivery-vans — all its moving trade, its moving people, its moving life. Think that by taking off the horses you save one-third of the crowding in its streets. Think that by using electricity you make London silent — a city that will preserve the mind instead of knocking it to pieces. Picture to

yourself London in August without the flying bits of dung from the streets. Think of all the factories and the workshops — the noise and smoke and dirt : all that in the future must work by electricity. Then the light railways to the suburbs : in my train every car will drive itself ; but one switch will control the whole. No more shunting ; no more locomotives. Then the long-distance railways — I have the plans — and steam is beaten at last. It will transform London — will make it sweet to live in, not filthy. Then they talk to me of races from Paris to Bordeaux ! Bah ! It is not for that, my friend, that I give my sleep and my youth and my life to this work. You will live, my friend, to see this London changed so that our grandfathers would not know it.”

CHAPTER XII

SLEEPLESS LONDON

THE hardest-worked of London's thoroughfares is Fleet Street; its bedtime is from one to three. These are the hours men seize upon to wash it: by the time the last suburban home-goers have reached Ludgate Hill the vestry men are out with their hose to sluice the poor tired thing down. It is almost empty. A hansom or two lies in wait for the infrequent editor. The policeman stands in a reverie to read the bill of fare of the long-cold restaurant, and haply wonders what "choux-fleurs au gratin" might be.

You go back at three — when the rest of London has got soundly to its nest — and Fleet Street, hardly dry from its morning tub, is in the flush of its morning's work. A dull grinding roar runs surf-like along its two shores — the sound of many printing machines. Carts are moving through winding alleys out of gas-lit stables. Piles of newspapers grow up on its pavements, and presently

one by one the carts clatter away. The muffled shriek of whistles and the clang of distant buffers remind you that the railway stations — they also — never sleep.

Clatter and whistle and clank — yet with it all Fleet Street is unearthly still. You miss the background — the roar, that orchestration of the London streets which in the daytime accompanies and harmonises all the leading notes. At night the roar is gone; a cart comes round a corner with a crash that almost startles. It is the same with sight as with sound. It seems a paradox, but the night is the only time when you can see London. In the daytime if you tried to look up you would be knocked down. Moreover, it never occurs to you to do any such thing; the ever-driving torrent of traffic keeps the eyes down, and you forget that the buildings are anything more than the frontiers of the roadway.

Go down to the Embankment, for example, where you can watch the Thames. Blackfriars and Waterloo Bridges are coronets of lamps; between them the venerable river is half seen, half divined through his mantle of mist. He is darkly turbid in the yellow gaslight, and you can smell his nakedness; yet he is very great and deep and strong, bearing up the heavy barges lightly, running, winding, powerfully yet not violently, through the

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heart of the City, reminding us that we are of the sea. One barge drifts past like a phantom; the clink of the windlass on another insists on making itself known more intimately than by day. Here, again, London never sleeps; but, ever carrying, scavenging, seething, inspiring, the most wakeful of all Londoners is the Thames.

“Whispering terrible things, and dear” — to all of us — whispering of trade and empire to some, but whispering perhaps something else, not less terrible and dear, to these shadow-shapers on the Embankment benches. They, too, are part of sleepless London — because they must be. The rule is that you may sit on the Embankment seats, but you must not doze there; and that rule the police enforce. So you see dim forms rise up at the *reveille* of the policeman’s boot, and walk themselves awake again, passing on to the next seat. But that is full — three old men and an old-young woman, their clothes swaddled round them as far as they will go. A boy — thank heaven for boys! — has had the idea of hiding himself behind one of the parapets near the river police station and sleeps profoundly. So does a gentleman with a white tie showing over his coat, sitting with his head swinging outboard as if it would break off and tumble into the tall hat which rolls at his side. Snoring richly, he is — for the moment — the happiest man

on the Embankment. For the rest of them — they are London's bad dreams.

There are three things, you soon perceive, for which London will not wait — food, letters, and newspapers. The paper-carts are still clattering towards the stations, and there is nothing to compete with them but the four-horsed parcel-post vans and the market wains. They both breathe of the country, and altogether at night London is very much nearer to the fields outside than she is by day. The post-vans have come up by road from anywhere within fifty miles, for all the world like stage-coaches: they are a suggestive comment on our loose control over our railways.

The big draught-horses and big waggons have not come so far; but they have come far enough to give you a smell of apples and turnips, almost as sweet as hay. At Covent Garden you find them slowly choking up the maze of little streets. Porters pass slowly up and down; work is in full swing; but again all is curiously silent. The men are too sleepy to give you the full benefit of their mixture of country and cockney; there is no sound but the scrunch of heavy wheels, backing to their unloading places, and the slithering of heavy iron-shod feet on the sticky cobbles, as the luckier horses file off to their stables. The bait-stable might come straight from a farm — just a big whitewashed

blank with a manger along one end; the smell of this, too, has stolen some sweetness from the fields. Covent Garden is half lit and half asleep; Smithfield, on the other hand, flares with light and echoes with strong voices. Through the broad streets you are guided by meat-waggons of a form seldom seen by daylight — a sort of railway horse-box on wheels, but with open sides, which show you half-oxen hanging, each in its own compartment, from the roof. Through the alleys about little Britain you may follow a steady stream of salesmen, brisker than the vegetable people of Covent Garden. And the big market is a blaze of light and colour.

But London is not all belly; the General Post Office is an island of gaslight, and the red mail-carts are lumbering off after the newspapers towards the early trains. But go on to Cheapside, and at last you come to what you sought — London asleep. Here, indeed, the city is paved with silence. The very policeman hardly breaks it — for most of his time he is bending over locks to see if anybody is out a-burgling. You can look down glades of houses, all asleep, and see not a single living thing. And all the time, dim as the light is, you find yourself discovering beauties and interests passed a hundred times unsuspected in the broad light. The City churches, by day those survivals of a dead past, now become the focusses of hitherto unnoticed

street-scapes. The Bank is mean, and the only interesting thing about the Royal Exchange is its grasshopper. But a church of St. Peter lets a serene classical face into the architecture of Cornhill that dignifies all the street, and the key on the top of it is the dominant note of a whole eye-full. Near it you see an ornate Gothic porch, where, till now, you have only seen ornate stockbrokers. Queerest of all is a little country Quaker meeting-house, right in the middle of Bishopsgate Street, a couple of very old shops for its lower storey, going by the name of St. Ethelburga's. I seem to have heard of it in some connection with Mr. Kensit, or Father Black, or some other church-brawler; but who did ever set eyes on it in Bishopsgate Street?

Time has been crawling on—you must try walking aimlessly all night before you can realise how slowly time crawls. Now it is half-past five. Pacing half asleep along Bishopsgate Street, you meet a working man, striding smartly, his dinner in a red handkerchief. Behind follow another and another, then two, then a group. You notice that they all step onward as with a purpose, very differently from the loafers of the night. These must be morning people, beginning their day, not ending it. Then you turn the corner of Liverpool Street, and a thick column of men is streaming out of the

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Great Eastern Station, heading across the road, plunging forward into the streets all around.

And suddenly, all at once, it is morning. Dawn steals up shyly under electric lamps, but now you see that the sky has lightened from dark grey to nearly white. Things begin to clothe themselves in their day colours. You feel the breath of the morning on your face and its indefinable stirring in your blood—yes, even in Finsbury you feel it. People crowd in round every corner, from every opening as at a cue; they might be the chorus filling up the stage of an opera. From Broad Street now as well as Liverpool Street, on foot, on bicycles, leaping down from the tail-boards of railway waggons, they come and come. A public-house, closed a moment ago, is suddenly open. From nowhere spring up men at every corner selling morning papers. For two hours they pour in steadily; faster and faster the stations vomit them out, till succeeding train-loads merge into one continuous torrent of people. Nearly all are men — which is the characteristic of the land where the working man brings a cup of tea to his wife's bedside — while abroad a large proportion would be women. The wonder is whither are they all bound. For though London is clearly awake and has already absorbed its thousands, it hardly seems

less empty than before. A few men at work on a building, an electrical engineer on a doorstep just getting to work at his dynamos, a man removing a dust-bin—that is all, so far. London is so vast that all this crowd soaks in no deeper than this. But all the fringe is waking now, and every station pours in its fresh hordes. Presently the shops are opening. The first Tall Hat rises splendidly on the scene. London is awake indeed.

CHAPTER XIII

A CONCLUSION : LONDON THE PROVINCIAL

THE truest and most significant remark ever made about London is to be found in the words of the illustrious Baedeker. "Not taking into account," he off-handedly remarks, "the extensive outlying districts in the N. and N.E., which are comparatively uninteresting to strangers." Those districts are larger and more populous by themselves than most of the capitals of the world. Yet who could take them into account?

London's children — such of them as have not sharpened their impulse to comparison by travel among other capitals — are wont to conceive of their mother city as hideous but monstrously impressive. Those who have travelled and compared will usually tell you the exact opposite. A few years ago, Mr. Grant Allen labelled London "a Squalid Village," and instituted an elaborate comparison, to London's humiliation, with — Brussels. It was hard to bear, but it was largely

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true. Where Mr. Grant Allen was unjust, if I remember him aright, was in denying London not only form and comeliness, but beauty altogether. I should urge against him that London is the most beautiful, and at the same time the most provincial, of all the capital cities of the earth.

Some capitals were born; some were made: London grew. In the task of looking like capitals, the cities which were born start naturally with a huge advantage. To look like a capital a city wants order, unity of plane, the impression of stately completeness. You see it best, where you would least expect it, in the United States. Washington is the best example: the men who laid it off, as their expressive phrase is, put the Capitol on an eminence in the middle, and grouped everything symmetrically round it. The streets were arranged in the national gridiron, with the Capitol as centre; the Mormon layers-off of Salt Lake City did the same with their Temple. In Washington they relieved the monotony of this plan by broad avenues cutting the gridiron diagonally. The result is that Washington is unmistakably one city, as much a complete and artistic whole as is a play of Sophocles or a symphony of Mozart. All the parts relate one to another. Washington has grown out of its complete symmetry, it is true; it has spread, as cities will, more on one side

than on another. But it remains a coherent whole. When you are in one part you carry the locality of all other parts in your head, and all its architectural jewels are presented in the openest and most advantageous setting.

The European capitals are too old for this deliberate symmetry. Mostly they come into the class of cities that were made. Paris was carved into cohesion by Haussmann with circles of boulevards and systems of avenues. Chicago, which is really a capital also, is following the example with a difference: the magnificent avenues and gardens on the blue sea-front of Lake Michigan are its base, and it has buttressed its ring of boulevards with noble parks. Vienna transformed itself from a cramped medieval town to a capital by levelling its fortifications into the Ring — a circlet of palaces and parliaments, museums, galleries and courts, opera and university, without an equal for imperial stateliness. Other cities, less successful in grouping their features, have aligned themselves along a great street. "Unter den Linden" is one example, with two palaces, two museums, opera and university and a dozen statues in a length of a mile, with a triumphal arch at one end and a square with palace, gallery, and cathedral at the other. The Rue Royale at Brussels is another — lined with public buildings, with a panorama of the

whole city breaking away from one side and the elephantine Palace of Justice blocking it at the end.

After all these take the night boat home and run in at a sunshiny dawn upon our beloved London. You will have seen nothing in all your journeying more beautiful than the morning sheen, half mist, half smoke, that gilds the endless ocean of roofs so tenderly. But when you set yourself down at Charing Cross, our dear London does not look like a capital. You are in the heart of it; what do you see? There is Nelson welcoming you back, certainly — he, too, you recall, was sea-sick on a small boat — and the National Gallery. But the Government offices are best seen from St. James's Park, and the Royal Palaces, dotted about by themselves, are best not seen at all; the Cathedral is a couple of miles away, looking out on to the narrow alleys of Cheapside and Ludgate Hill, as the Palace of Justice coops in the narrow alley of Fleet Street; the Opera is tucked up in a vegetable-market, and for that matter is not to-day open; the Houses of Parliament are in a corner to themselves, carefully posted where they destroy the view of Westminster Abbey; the Abbey has fortified its one visible side with Absurd St. Margaret's; the University has no students, and the Municipal Buildings do

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not even pretend to exist at all. Poor London! It has no centre and no shape; it is all parts and no whole.

The best way to impress a foreign visitor with London is to take him to the front of the Royal Exchange, tell him that the Mansion House is a charity school, and the Bank of England a debtors' prison — he will readily believe both falsehoods — and then divert his attention to the people. That boiling whirlpool of men is the real sight of London. And after all, somebody will say, it is men that make a great city. So it is in one sense, yet not in every sense; else Epsom Downs on Derby Day is a great city. A capital, to strike the eye and get home to the imagination, ought visibly and succinctly to summarise the whole activity of a nation. Vienna does this for you in a walk round the Ring. There is the Emperor, the Imperial Family, there are the great nobles, Austrian drama and music and painting, the Catholic Church, the army, and the Stock Exchange — all represented concretely in architecture. You may search London till your legs ache for any such summary of England, not to speak of the British empire, in a walk of an hour.

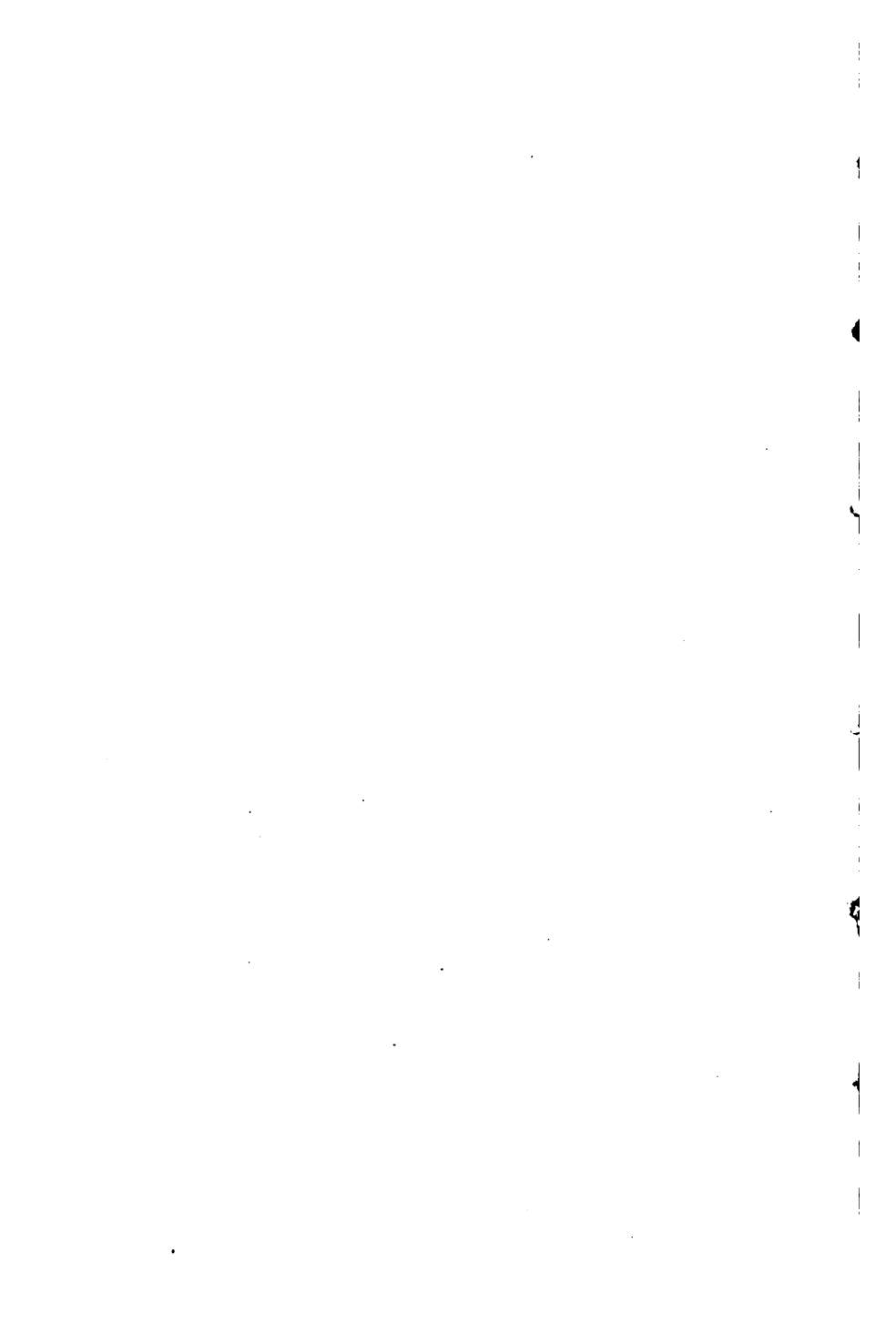
But London is my native city, and I love every smut of it. It has the gift of an air which mantles it twice daily in matchless beauty. It has a river

which is truly a living river — not a carefully preserved ditch like the Spree or Wien, or a toy like the Seine, but a highway of ships and a vista of endless mystery and grandeur. Steam up it at evening in the red eye of the sun, and see the smoky majesty of London rise luridly up to heaven, and you will never call it anything but the most wonderful and most awful of all cities. It is really the heart of the world. But inside it does not look like that.

Part II

THE PARIS OF TO-DAY

**ITS CHARMS, MYSTERIES, AND
POSSIBILITIES**



The Paris of To-day



CHAPTER I

THE CAPITAL OF CIVILISATION

I BLUSH for the French as deeply as anybody. I realise as clearly, too, that if they wish to remain a nation they should send for British governors, British judges, and a British army of occupation, leaving to themselves the cultivation of the arts in which they admittedly excel. I am loath to break my journeys in their capital, and especially shrink from pretending that I can speak a little of their language. Yet I here admit at the very beginning that if anything could make an Englishman ashamed of England, it would be two days in Paris.

It is useless to contend against the truth. Paris is the capital of civilisation. Paris has been the capital of civilisation ever since civilisation began. In the course of our national business of empire

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we have often occasion to use the word, but one look at Paris is enough to inform even the partial mind how little we know of civilisation, the fact, the life. Our civilisation is of the kind we can pass on to lower stairs of humanity, to their great benefit and our own. The Parisian civilisation is a rare vintage that loses its bouquet the moment it passes outside the fortifications. Therefore, Parisian civilisation is of limited use to the world: but it is of great use to Paris.

London was obviously made — had to work for its living, and won its imperial greatness gradually and with pain. The streets of Mayfair are patchwork, and the houses and alleys of the City squeeze each other till you expect to see them pushed off their legs. The people who began these things seem never to have guessed that the work of their hands was destined to become great. But Paris gives the impression of having known her imperial destiny from the baking of the very first brick.

You go to your window in the morning and look out upon a forest of twisted, zinc chimney-pots, less beautiful than sign-posts. Beyond them, it may be, rises the arc of a great wheel, and that straddling, graceful monstrosity, the Eiffel Tower. From the streets rise the sounds of lumbering, of antiquated omnibuses and the clattering grunts of

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precocious automobiles. There ought to be nothing at all beautiful and dignified about it. Yet the air is so clear and essentially still, the light so sharp and serene, the lines of the houses so correct and harmonious, everything so bright and clear, that you might be in a seventeenth century court instead of in a nineteenth-century capital. Outside there is everywhere space and light and air; Paris has grown without cramping. You come on vast façades, whether of palaces or of private houses, all blending into a large effect, which is both light and stately — neither heavy, like the Quadrant, nor trumpery, like South Kensington. The smaller streets are clean-paved underfoot, silent, and not jammed by traffic — they might be rides cut through a wood. The very workmen's quarters bristle without choking; the very tenement-houses remember that they owe a duty to the eye.

I wrote these words in autumn days, and at the season all Paris smelled of falling chestnut and plane; your feet rustled in the leaves, and through the half-stripped boughs you peeped at sixteenth-century mansions and advertisements of the phonograph.

For Paris is both old and new — the oldest and the newest of ruling cities, the most primitive and the most complex. At night the central

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streets are all electric light and transparencies: to our one "Vinolia" or "Mellin's Food" they have fifty; "Express Bar," "Folies Bèrgère," or "Café Chose": the whole boulevard twinkles with their rose-coloured lights. Yet beneath them go men in blouses and women in aprons who might be taken for peasants. At Paillard's you will hardly dine for less than a sovereign; but there are a thousand places where you can fill yourself for 4d. The bicycle is almost a solecism in Paris by now, and the petroleum tricycle or landau whirrs in and out the traffic at twenty miles an hour. Yet the *fiacre* still crawls rheumatically over the cobbles at two miles an hour, and the *cocher* has not yet begun to learn to drive. Steam tramways will carry you twenty miles out of Paris; yet the omnibus is slower, heavier, uglier, more uncomfortable than a prison-van.

You see that your neighbour in a restaurant bows and smiles with a gracious charm that makes you feel a cub and a barbarian. Then you take up a 'Libre Parole' and find one of the most influential men in France signing his name to a responsible article in this significance: "I understand that the indignation of Frenchmen over the trio of rascals trading as Loew, Bard, and Manau" — M. Loew ranking as the most venerable judge in France, the others grave legal functionaries, and

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their crime being that they decided the Dreyfus appeal according to the evidence.

Paris is full of these contrasts, and the reason for them is in itself a paradox. Paris is the unchallenged capital of civilisation, yet Paris is the most insular spot in the whole world. We are called insular, but the most aboriginal islander of us all would be cosmopolitan compared to the Parisian. Paris has dropped out of the world through her own cleverness. She has been too far ahead to lead others, and now she is too proud to keep step. If the new amuses her she runs wild over it; but if not, as long as the antiquated is her own, she is well pleased with it. Full of amenity, of beauty, of intelligence, she has made a life for herself which satisfies her, and she cares nothing at all for the world outside. The Parisian knows no language but his own, no other literature, no other manner of thought, no other mode of life. He has heard of the achievements of other peoples, but he has no concern to study, still less to imitate, them. He is quite satisfied that the world must come to Paris, and never dreams of troubling himself to go to the world.

It chanced, on a day, that a newspaper brought out a placard announcing "Automobilism in the Sudan!" I supposed it was the advertisement of a circus; yet, after all, it was a serious project.

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A gentleman who made a remarkable and courageous journey in the neighbourhood of Timbuctoo was about to make a Sudan expedition in motor cars. He observed that much of his route was suitable to the automobile, and he pertinently pointed out that if automobiles had been running in the Sudan, Marchand need not have taken two years to reach Fashoda, and Kitchener need not have troubled about the desert railway. All you want in order to get from anywhere to anywhere is automobiles, and plenty of them. He has not, I fancy explained what you do in those not inconsiderable parts of the Sudan which are not suitable to the automobile. Probably he smiles to himself; but to explain things like that is not the Parisian point of view. Paris is logical: the petroleum tricycle is successful in the Rue de la Paix; therefore it must be successful in Timbuctoo.

De Lesseps made the Suez Canal; therefore, argued Paris, he could make that of Panama. The extra-Parisian circumstance that Panama was not Suez did not come into reckoning. *Préfets* and *procureurs* and *chefs de bureau* are necessary to Paris; therefore they are necessary to Pondicherry. France cannot exist without her army; therefore a general is sacred. Enthymemes like these make France great at home and ineffectual abroad.

I visited one fine Sunday a little town just over

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twenty miles from Paris. I dined in the inn — a couple of cyclists from Paris yawning at the other side of the table, a local notary and a couple of friends at the top. Afterwards, as I was in possession of no French money, I proposed to pay the bill with a sovereign. A sovereign is currency in the remotest village of Norway, in Turkey, in Egyptian mud-bazaars, — in places, indeed, where a white man has hardly ever been seen. But the French inn-keeper, twenty miles from Paris, had never seen a sovereign; he had never heard of one, and he absolutely declined, though with the utmost politeness, to bid more than twenty francs for it.

That is a parable of the state of things in France. In England we are troubled and grave, preparing our fleets, regretful that France will be our enemy, that France insists on war. But if war came, nobody would be more utterly astounded than France. France in bulk really pays almost no attention to critical State questions. If we declared war France would consider it a most unprovoked aggression, even as she regards the plain-speaking of our journals as mere mud-hurling. For, in truth, the queen of civilisation is wholly and hopelessly provincial.

CHAPTER II

THE DAY OF THE DEAD

ON All Souls' Day Paris is in mourning. When you look at the streets — women muffled in crape, and men walking funereally in black trousers — you would suppose that some plague had fallen on the city. Nearly half the people you meet abroad seem going to a funeral. Their faces are rigid, their gait demure. It is the Day of the Dead — the day that follows All Saints' Day, the day which in Catholic countries is given up to the pious petitionings for the "Souls of the Faithful Departed."¹

The principal place of pilgrimage is Père Lachaise, the great cemetery of Paris. It lies in the north-eastward part of the city in a squalid quarter — as squalid, that is to say, as Paris, the bright, can ever be. You approach the cemetery

¹ I have here taken the liberty to turn Mr. Steevens's naturally untechnical, and therefore not quite accurate, phrase into the actual terms in use, according to the general customs of the Roman Church in England. — Ed.

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through high, narrow streets of poor shops ; yet a Londoner cannot but be struck by their cleanness. In London everything must needs be grimed with soot ; in Paris, externals may be shabby, but they look as things look which have been washed by rain and dried by sun.

As you get nearer to Père Lachaise, the shops all take one character. They deal in funerals and in the memorials of the dead. Slabs and pillars and crosses salute you on every side ; but even thicker are the flower-shops, yellow wreaths, bunches of everlasting flowers, chrysanthemums and violets neatly done up in paper, — most of all, rather cheap and tawdry imitations in coloured wire — you pass through an avenue of them to the cemetery gate. That gate is thronged like the church-door of a fashionable wedding. Carriages and cabs draw up and rumble away endlessly ; a long queue stands at one side waiting to pick up — anything from the smartest brougham to the rickety four-wheeler of the outer regions. It is almost a case of forcing your way in through the crowd.

You find yourself moving with a thick stream of people travelling up a hill towards a little chapel. Another stream as thick pours down the other side. Every class of people is there — some in fur with footmen carrying wreaths behind them, but more bareheaded and in aprons. About half are in

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mourning — women muffled in crape, out of which their set faces and tight lips look dismally : men, also with set faces and wearing enormous hat-bands. By the side of these the other half — they also often carrying flowers — move lightly, laugh, smoke cigarettes, tap graves with their canes, criticise the taste of the wreaths, and group themselves curiously round anybody who is seen busy at a tomb. To these the Day of the Dead is a sort of public holiday ; evidently their own dead, still remembered, are too far away for any other feeling. You climb the hill through an avenue of tombs. They are not simple headstones or pillars or crosses like those to which we are accustomed, but small shrines. Most of them consist of a little chamber of stone, big enough for four people to stand in ; there is one locked door in front, and another inside at the back of the altar. In this avenue the tombs are usually old ; the stone is worn and brown, and it looks sodden with rain. Many of them belong to two families in common. Between them are planted dark-leaved trees, — not our churchyard yew, but other trees of the same tribe with various kinds of fir — a kind which is solemn, but which is yet too green to be gloomy. And along the middle of the avenue, dividing the one human stream which is going up from the other human stream that is going down, laugh

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beds of bright flowers. At the top of the ascent, before the chapel, is a broken pillar, which an inscription declares to be the pillar of remembrance. I suppose that means remembrance of those who have no tomb in the cemetery; it was a heap of flowers—wreaths, bunches, single blossoms, real or artificial, all piled mountainously up half the height of the column.

A few steps farther on, join the crowd, and go into the chapel. Holy water at the door, wherewith the women cross themselves reverently (the Frenchman is, as a rule, no more devout than men in any other country). The chapel is a very small one; along half its length are seats and praying-stools; in the other half, on each side of the image of the Virgin, on two trays, burns an army of white candles. Some three feet tall, some burned down almost to the butt, they put up their flame steadfastly before the Mother and Child, and plead for the souls of the dead. Almost human they looked—the tall proud ones at the beginning of their task, and the stumpy little ones enduring faithfully to the end—their donors having long ago left about their other affairs,—praying, praying as long as there is a half-inch of tallow to pray with. I do not think the severest Protestant could laugh at those praying candles.

The people—perhaps knowing that the candles

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could be trusted — mostly stepped inside, looked, and came out again; only a few sank down and hid their faces. Others walked on with curiosity to the brick building, the passages whereof struck warm, while the chimney smoked perpetually — the crematorium. But on the Day of the Dead, even in cremation you are not forgotten. There are high walls in this part of the cemetery, built either singly or in courts; these are divided into little squares, and each of the dead has his tablet. In the tablets are fixed little hooks whereto they hang the memorial wreaths. The inscriptions, as a rule, were quite covered up: the whole wall was a riot of green and yellow, white, violet, and crimson.

I chanced to see the graves of a few illustrious people. That of Alfred de Musset was ablaze with flowers, and so, even more, was that of Michelet. Hard by is the Duc de Morny's tomb, a spacious shrine with fast-locked double doors. It chanced that on the handles of them somebody had threaded two penny bunches of violets. It was hardly what you would have expected at Morny's grave: it perhaps meant nothing, and yet you might imagine a thousand pretty histories to account for it. But perhaps the most suggestive of all tombs was Balzac's. It is quite plain, with bronze bust above it, and under the

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bust the huge book described 'Comédie Humaine'; and it was utterly neglected, but for one wreath of coloured wire which hung shamefacedly on the railings, and three ragged chrysanthemums which somebody had dropped upon the book.

In the newer parts of Père Lachaise chambers are not universal: there are monuments mostly in the low coffin-shape with crosses at the raised ends, which you may see in our own country. But these are, as a rule, more elaborate than ours; and, with a grandiloquence that moves the Englishman to smile, most of them have "concession to perpetuity" carved on the back. Yet there was nothing but simplicity about the mourners. They were sprinkled all over the tracts of graves, darker blots among the white stones and green trees. Some strolled idly. But here you saw a tall man and woman kneeling beside a grave; there a woman in voluminous crape, red-eyed, among a group of impassive men in light overcoats, but behind a boy of sixteen or so, also red-eyed. There, again, stood a young man, most elegant, quite alone, holding his brilliant hat in his hand, staring at the letters on a grave while minute after minute went by, neither moving limb nor lifting eye, nor taking any note of anything. A few graves away was a coarse-faced, fat, elderly woman; presumably she could not muster more mourning

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than a rusty-black bonnet and bodice, for her skirt was shabby blue; slowly she bent down and put on to a tombstone a green and purple circlet of wire flowers — a franc, but they last better than real ones — and then turned away, looked back, turned and looked back again: her face was hideously puckered up, all the features meeting in the middle, lest she should weep on to her bodice.

At the foot of the hill Paris wept, too, muffled in a crape of mist, clammy and cold and grey. You could see nothing but one or two tall chimney-stacks; the mist blotted out everything else and rolled up to the cemetery. In the fading light the hill with the mourners on it became an island of death, rising alone out of a sea of cold, grey emptiness.

The night before I had been to a music-hall — an elegant place. In morning dress, coats buttoned up, hands in trousers pockets, most of them wearing folding eye-glasses, young Frenchmen came forward and sang songs full of every kind of brilliant scurrility and neatly hinted filthiness, aimed at everybody in France. The ladies in the audience, understanding every innuendo, laughed and whispered, "C'est chic." "How Parisian," you say. But then the tender mourners at Père Lachaise were quite Parisian too. Here were family affection, deep love, quiet self-restraint, yet

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passionate regret—just what we sometimes tend to think the French character lacks. Of course there is no essential contradiction between the two; but the Day of the Dead is a warning to those of us who incline not to see the kindlier side of our neighbours.

CHAPTER III

IN THE CAFÉ

IT is a familiar remark among foreigners visiting London for a short acquaintance that all Englishmen look exactly alike. To the fugitive observer of Paris all Frenchmen look almost entirely different. The eye least trained to look beneath the superficial can distinguish a dozen types along a dozen yards of boulevard. The man of fashion, whom nothing in his clothes differentiates from an Englishman; the solid bourgeois in his black overcoat, tight just below the waist and loose everywhere else, his dark trousers and straight-brimmed hat; the young man with tendencies to the Bohemian, with a loose tie cascading in dark green silk half-way down his waistcoat; the provincial in bowler and rough-hewn black cloth, stepping heavily and looking heavily at everything about him — of course there is nothing strange in all this. We have all these types in London, but they are not sharply enough defined for the foreigner to mark them. In Paris they leap to the

eye. Perhaps it is not fanciful to suppose from this that in France divisions of class, of place, of origin, of pursuit, are deeper down than in England. There seem to be a dozen kinds of life in Paris, each in its own enclosure, living for itself and caring little for the interests, the pursuits, the manner of existence of the others.

Come now, for example, into one of the higher restaurants at the hour of *déjeuner* on Sunday. It is a place that had a reputation all over Europe as long as anybody under fifty can well remember; and it is about the size of your drawing-room. There is room in it for some forty guests, by dint of a great deal of crowding. At the moment it is quite empty. But the position of the tables has not been changed for five-and-twenty years. Such restaurants are nearly the only conservative things in Paris. Public men cheapen; *voisin* does not. Governments pass away; the Café Anglais does not pass away.

Into our restaurant enter three people — an elderly man and elderly woman, and a private soldier. In England you would stare; but in France and elsewhere on the conscriptive Continent you may naturally see private soldiers anywhere. I have seen privates in line regiments going into the stalls for “Parsifal” at Bayreuth with the full orchestral score beneath their arms.

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The position soon explains itself. The soldier is the lady's son; he has got a few hours' leave from the barracks, and his mother is bringing him to get a good meal, of which he is probably much in need. They sit down side by side. Out of the *képi*, the long blue coat with red braid epaulettes, the red bags of trousers, appears a boy's face, podgy and pasty like the faces of most French boys, — not without refinement, but without a single sign of health or strength — a strange face, you think, for a soldier. The mother is voluminously attired in black crape, with a worn face, and — alas! — one of the complexions which we shall know better in a few years than we do now — a complexion that looks as if it had been much scraped with a blunt razor, that tells tales of paint and powder. The gentleman, grey beard, tight frock-coat, red ribbon of the Legion of Honour in his button-hole, sits opposite. (Having regard to the crape, I am not clear in my mind whether he ought to be called father or next-of-kin.)

The waiter brings the bill of fare, and immediately three heads go down together for a consultation of breathless seriousness. When you order your lunch at a restaurant you run your eye hurriedly down the bill and dash at the first thing you think you can eat. Here — especially at this restaurant — on a Sunday out, the matter is far too

vital to be treated so. One does not pay this money every day. So every dish is debated as if it were a clause in an Act of Parliament. We should not think it worth while; but then French people would not think the Act of Parliament worth while — it is a question of the point of view. Finally it is ordered — rich beyond the dreams of extravagance. For one course the bill is found quite inadequate, despite its half-dozen suggestions; something must be specially prepared. The oysters come and the wine. “You do not drink wine yet?” asks the next-of-kin — he *must* be the next-of-kin — of the soldier.

“Mais si!” “Oh yes:” the cry of enthusiasm, mixed with apprehension, almost shook the room. “He is a man now,” says the mother; and, indeed, if one is old enough to serve one’s country one is surely old enough to take a share of its wine. And how it repaid itself! He came in sallow, worn by exercise that left him spiritless and not in condition. When I went away — they had eaten enormously of four courses and were well on their way through two large lobsters — his cheek was pink, his eyes sparkled, he talked and laughed under the approving eye of his mother. The service which was a martyrdom before was now a mine of jokes and stories. Especially it was on evidence that now he was a man.

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For dinner we might choose a cheaper, fuller, noisier place. Yet the place, too, is self-respecting beyond the wont of restaurants of its class in London. At the door is a resplendent porter in a red waistcoat — white-haired, pink-faced, chubby, and vast, like the best type of coachman. A page stands behind him whose whole duty in life is to open and shut the outer and inner doors as you pass in or out. The plump — no, fat — head-waiter is both deferential and fatherly. In the restaurant is a blaze of light, extended endlessly by mirrors, and a wealth of snow-white table-linen: cheap economy in linen you never meet in a French restaurant. The place is full and dim with a faint cloud of cigarette-smoke, and reverberant with higher-pitched female laughter than could be heard at home.

But you must chance your company, for Paris is less decent or less hypocritical — you will call it what you like — than London. At the next table are a middle-aged man and a young woman: from the mingling of familiarity and aloofness in their behaviour you guess that they have been acquainted for perhaps half an hour. The man is big, square-headed, heavy-eyed, and heavy-jawed, with a figure half brutality and half energy. His hands are grimy, his nails black; he wears a huge diamond brooch for a breast-pin. The girl is

pretty and young, but her eyes are callous, and her lips are eager to sneer. The man orders the coffee and cognac for himself. "And, waiter, don't forget the ice," half screams the girl after the retreating form. From the half-greedy, half-combative eagerness of her tone you guess that he promised her an ice, and that she suspects him of trying to cheat her of it. "If we were to go to a theatre," she says then, addressing him for the first time. "In the provinces one goes to a theatre," he replies; "in Paris a café-chantant is better." It is said almost roughly and plainly; it is useless arguing the point. Then the bill comes; he looks jealously at every item, adds it up, grunts, pays, says "Come," and they go out.

On the other side is a very different dinner — an old man, small, with a delicate complexion, a perfectly trained white moustache, and fine, white, perfectly tended hands. His napkin is tucked into his frock-coat — the best people did it in the time of the Second Empire — and he wears his straight-brimmed tall hat at the slightest angle. Having got it on with such a perfect suggestion of elegance combined with care, it is evident that it would be a shame to take it off. He consults with the waiters in a thin but agreeable voice, calling up four of them to discuss every order, addressing them with the easy politeness of one

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unaccustomed to expect presumption. He eats little, but chooses with the greatest care. At the end he asks for an apple. They bring him a dish; he examines and takes all the expert opinion on each one of them. He disapproves of each in turn, and then the waiter offers a good pear. "I asked for an apple," he replies, wondering that his wishes should have been even for a moment subjected to correction. Then the head-waiter, rallying to the spot, picks out a green apple, and explains that it is of a new and excellent kind. "It is just simply a green apple," says the old gentleman, in final tones, and abashed, they take all the fruit away.

Meanwhile a provincial and his wife had come in on the other side — she, once very pretty, in neat black bonnet and neat black gown and white collar; he in black jacket and clean white tie, with a rather coarse but vivacious face and tumultuous black moustache. From his speech — *z* for *j*, and soft *c* for *ch* — he appeared to be from the South.

Speech and movements were abrupt and decisive, but when the waiter brought up the bill of fare he handed it mutely to his wife. She ordered soup.

"I cannot take soup," he said loudly; "it is bad for my teeth. Bring me half a *pâté de foie gras*."

“No,” cried his wife with energy. “Thou shalt not eat it. It is bad for thee” — it is also expensive — “and thou shalt not eat it.”

“Bring me ——”

“Do not bring the *pâté de foie gras*.” She was white with rage, and quivered all over; she drummed on the table uncontrollably, and slapped her fist into her other hand before his eyes.

He hesitated, and was lost; the waiter brought soup. Appeased, the lady ladled it out, and with hideous grimaces he began to eat.

At this moment came out three men and three gorgeously dressed young women. As they passed out the lady turned with concentrated scorn and said, “I suppose that calls itself beautiful.”

“Not like thee,” said the husband. And with these words the battle was won in the moment of defeat. She smiled and laid her hand on his. “Waiter,” he said tentatively; then, with new confidence, “Waiter, bring me half a *pâté de foie gras*.”

When I went out he had nearly eaten it. His wife watched him placidly, and I thought I detected in his eye an intention to attempt the ordering of the other half of the *pâté* also. . . . That too.

CHAPTER IV

THE REVENGE FOR FASHODA : A PARABLE

“YES,” said the deputy-editor in the days of Fashoda excitement — the editor had been hitherto one of the most pious worshippers at the statue of Strasburg — “yes ; we have given up Fashoda. But remember this : henceforth it is not Germany which is the enemy, — it is England.”

The first irrepressible reflection was, that it does not seem to have done Germany very much harm to be the enemy for twenty-seven years ; and that, please God, we also might get off without vital damage. The next reflection was that this kind of politics is a little petulant, a trifle puerile. It is like the child who resigns a disputed toy to another. “All right — you can have it ; but I shan’t play with you any more.”

One newspaper proposes to withdraw the French Ambassador from the Court of St. James’s. “A simple secretary,” it explained, “is good enough to take a note of ultimatum.” “England,” says another, “by her attitude towards us has made any

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further negotiations with her impossible until the situation changes.”

To the British reader who, in the days of Fashoda, followed the controversy and its events, this last opinion will appear to be absolutely incomprehensible. “What about the Bahr-el-Ghazal, then?” he might immediately have asked. And as soon as he had asked that question he would be on the high road to enlightenment. The mass of French journalists — which means the mass of French people — had never heard of the Bahr-el-Ghazal; of those who had, not one in ten knew what it meant. “Don’t give up the Gazelle!” cried working men after the Sirdar, when he drove to the Mansion House; perhaps they, too, had no very clear idea what it was, but at any rate they knew it was a factor in the question. The Frenchman, so far as he heard of the question at all, merely labelled it as Fashoda. Once having labelled it, he was easy in his mind. And when he heard that Fashoda was to be given up, he took the whole thing as settled. “It is evacuation,” cried M. Paul de Cassagnac, “without a shadow of compensation, without the outlet into the valley of the Upper Nile which we demanded to save appearances.”

That is why they wondered (and suspected) when they heard that our preparations — their

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papers hardly whispered a word to them of their own — had not instantly been suspended. Fashoda was given up; what were the English about? Brutal, arrogant, perfidious, grasping, cynical creatures — what would they do next? Should they next hear that there was to be a question of the evacuation of Meshra-er-Rek, or any other point quasi-occupied by France east of the Nile-Congo watershed, their whole astonishment and indignation would burst forth again. England will be more brutal, more arrogant, more perfidious, more grasping, more cynical than ever.

It all came from the great source of all diplomatic troubles — the fundamental, incurable incapacity of different nations, of different races, to see from each other's point of view. To begin with, we are slow to think and quick to act; the French are quick to catch a point, but they see no reason why they should act on it to-day rather than to-morrow, or the day after, or the middle of next week. It is probable that not only M. Delcassé, but also most Frenchmen who could spare a thought or two for the question, saw that Fashoda could not be maintained from the very first. Having come to the conclusion, the matter had no more interest for the French mind. When we reverted to the point they merely talked, spun cobwebs of international law, criticised the manner

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of our talking, but quite forgot to act. Latin races do this; but we cannot understand it. We had come to our conclusion, somewhat painfully, and then it only remained to act. When we saw that France did not act we determined that she had no intention of acting. We determined that she meant war, which had never come into her head for a moment, and we began, somewhat slowly, to arm. That grieved and hurt and humiliated France beyond measure.

Then, again, the Briton, with all his limitations, surveys such questions as this from the same point of view as does a Foreign Minister. He sees them more or less steadily and more or less whole. Fashoda — the working man saw it quite clearly — was the place which Marchand was actually occupying; but the question was the ownership of the Bahr-el-Ghazal. The Frenchman does not look at questions so. He is limited as to space, even as he is limited as to time. Marchand was actually occupying Fashoda, and beyond Fashoda the Frenchman saw and wished to see nothing. Therefore he thought that the whole question raised by Marchand was answered to his disadvantage, and he was hurt and humiliated afresh that we regarded the answer as only partial.

For another point, we are practical and haply none too clear in our minds; the French mind is

logical and formalistic. In international law he thought his position was as good as ours, and I, for one, conceiving the arguments of each side to be radically self-contradictory, fully agree with him. But that any other considerations come in except those of international dialectics; that international law is a box of pills to cure earthquakes—very salutary when the earth is not quaking, hopelessly futile when it is—such an idea never occurs to his brains as a possibility. Of the more important factors in the question he can form no appreciation. The fact that we made great sacrifices for the valley of the Nile, that we have preponderant interests there, that it was only due to us that Marchand's apparent effective occupation was possible for but a moment,—these had no weight with the French. They did not touch the rights of the case, say the French—quite truly, from their point of view; for with them the same word stands for "right" and for "law." The broader facts do not touch the law.

With these vital differences in the point of view, it was hardly to be expected that we should understand each other or come to a settlement without some friction. The only question was whether we were not to blame for making the friction rougher than it need have been. It is only fair to say that every English resident of Paris with

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whom I talked on the subject thought that we were.

For once, said these advocates, the French press had behaved with perfect moderation and correctness, and the British press had been violent and menacing. The French did not want Fashoda: few knew where it was, fewer cared, and they would have given it up in a moment. Only when they saw the British papers threatening and British fleets preparing they scarcely liked it—and very naturally. Now they hate England—very naturally.

I replied that it was easy to be moderate and correct when you are plainly in the wrong and intend to admit it. Why did they ever go there? And why, intending to depart, did they remain?

“Oh, well—first, it was not the French nation, but Hanotaux, who sent Marchand: and the people did not take the British warning seriously: then they thought it was clever to creep in by the back door, and make up for their abandonment of Egypt in '82. The reason why they did not go at once was that they scarcely thought Lord Salisbury was in earnest, or else took no thought of it at all.

Most of us would answer that a nation which plays at politics in this light-hearted way had no right to dignify its disappointment by the word

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“humiliation.” A nation that strolls into an adventure in this frivolous manner can hardly complain when it is forced to climb down. If the French do not take their own politics seriously, they can hardly expect us to do so for them. The strange thing is that they did appear to take it seriously—almost tragically. Stranger still, they appeared to bow the head and accept it. Nobody blamed the Government for giving way. You would have said that the French fighting spirit was dead. The newspapers almost made a parade of French decadence. Never a one suggested that it would be possible for them to fight Britain: they talked quite openly of the probability that a war with us would leave France even as Spain. When Germany was the enemy, the cry was for revenge; now it appeared to be for pity.

But we need not take either threats or laments too seriously. They are not without their journalistic uses to stir up a spirited nation. People who feel really humiliated do not cry it on the housetops. True, the nation seems more conscious of decadence than most Englishmen could have believed possible. But it takes only a fortnight for even a Fashoda to be forgotten. France ever lives to find war possible once again in her life, and — with luck — may live to humiliate some neighbour, as she has done this many a time in the past.

CHAPTER V

LE SPORT DES "SNOBS"

THE seven horses came almost in a line for the first water-jump just opposite the stand. They looked like taking it together, till a couple of lengths away. Then two suddenly swerved, whipped round, and ran out. Two more blundered on the farther side and went down. One landed among the fallen, shied, then trotted through and went after the leaders. The two that had got clean over were already out of sight round the corner of the stand.

Two horses left in it, with four-fifths of the course still to run — and this was the Prix Montgomery, one of the biggest steeplechases in France. The horse I had backed was the third which had got over without damage, and if either of the leaders went down — which on present experience was a ten-to-one chance — I should make money.

The two leaders appeared on the farther side of the course, locked together, but where was my horse? I looked and looked — and presently,

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through glasses, discerned her busily refusing a simple hurdle, all by herself, in a corner of the course. Presently one of the horses that had run out reappeared, took the water-jump, and sailed off, a respectable fourth, half a mile or so behind. Just as the two leaders were coming round the second time, one of the jockeys who had fallen remounted and cantered off a comfortable fifth.

The first two took the fence and water again without a fault, and I looked out again for my third. She had got over the hurdle and a fence and an in-and-out, and was now — say — a thousand yards behind, conscientiously refusing another hurdle. After a while the jockey sat still to wait on the chance that something might come along to give him a lead. Presently the fourth horse arrived and gave the required lead, but my beast refused it with contempt. For her part she generously waited till the fifth horse arrived, and they went amicably on together, a mile or so behind. She survived until the second water-jump, which she refused definitely, and the jockey, perceiving the leaders just arriving for the third time, sat down in the saddle to watch the finish. It was not doubtful. Half a mile behind the third horse rolled in comfortably, and as I threw my *pari-mutuel* ticket over the rails and went downstairs, I was aware of the unhurried advent of the fourth.

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I own I thought the race a trifle disappointing. But the crowd? Disappointed? Not they! As the horses were coming to the stand, after the first five furlongs or so, all were made aware by a tinkle that the race had started. They gave a groan of joy when they saw the horses and jockeys come down at the water-jump — and then turned with energy to conversation again. At the finish they turned; a dozen of them languidly applauded the winner, and went off to get their money from the *pari-mutuel*. . . . Why should they bother about the racing? It was a delicious day, clear, soft, and clean after rain; it was a divinely beautiful course; and they had on their best clothes.

The Auteuil racecourse is at the southern end of the Bois de Boulogne. The turf was green velvet; the last leaves, just clinging to the trees with one drop or two of sap remaining, made hangings of red and brown and yellow round the long green oval. Rising above them were the upper storeys of a few grey mansions, the Eiffel Tower, the Great Wheel: above these again, of a more toneless grey, the foreshortened slopes of hills. Goodwood has a ruder, fuller-blooded beauty; Auteuil has exactly the civilised, small-compassed, symmetrical beauty of Paris. Goodwood lends itself to many pictures; Auteuil is one complete and whole picture. As for Newmarket

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— the town that smells of stable, the leafless sweep of downs, the razor-edged wind — you had only to look about you to see that there could be no such thing in France.

You had only to look at the people. The insular verdict, at the first sight of them, would be that you did not think there were so many gentlemen in Paris — nor so many *cocottes* in the world. Next moment candour pulled your sleeve to remind you that an un-English habit may yet contain a gentleman, and all that rouges is not *cocotte*. But to the English mind the appearance of racing Paris is wonderful indeed.

At first sight the men looked all English. Many of them were; yet you saw plenty of tall, straight-backed, broad-shouldered figures, clear brown skins with blood beneath them, clean-shaven chins and untortured moustaches, from under which issued the purest French. They caught the eye at first, but they were not the majority. For a more typical picture take this: tubby figure, yellow puffy cheeks, bright vivacious eyes and untrimmed black beard, varnished boots and white spats, tight black frock-coat and trousers, brilliant tartan tie, black bowler hat, and ribbon of the Legion of Honour.

And the ladies! I say the ladies, but for the life of me I could not tell which were ladies and

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which were something else. In November our ladies go racing in cloth skirts and covert-coats; the French lady goes in a lilac silk dress, sweeping the ground both before and behind when it is left alone: and when it is held up, as it usually is, with both hands, revealing a violet silk embroidered petticoat and heaven knows what in embroidered stockings. As for their faces—well, one can hardly say; there are strata of rouge and powder and bistre, but it would be rash to dogmatise about the face. This is the universal habit. I saw a stout grandmother of sixty moving in an aureole of floating powder, her upper lip caught and pointed in the centre, and bistre under her eyes. I saw a girl of fifteen, in short skirts and with flaxen hair down her back, upholstered in exactly the same degree. By the time they are twenty these girls must either make-up or look like wax dolls that have been too near the fire. But as long as their only ambition is to dress and look like the reigning courtesan, what does it matter? They have even arrived, just now, at the paradox that the courtesan is often more quietly and becomingly clad than the lady.

But we are straying away from the races. Come and put your money on before the next race starts, for at Auteuil they get through four steeplechases and two hurdle races well within three hours.

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You go to the counter of the *pari-mutuel*, mention the number — not the name — of the horse you want to back, whether to win or for a place, put down your money, and get a ticket in return. If you win, you take it to the window of the pay-box. The total betted on that race has been added up. Seven per cent is deducted — five per cent for expenses, two for the poor — and the remainder divided equally among the tickets that have been taken on the winning horse. Thus the odds adjust themselves. And it must be said that the French roll up to bet like men. But for that and the chance of accidents, they care little enough about the sport. A lady will return and say, “Ah, it was a very dull day; not one jockey hurt!”

Why, then, have races at all? Why not be content with lotteries and an occasional bull-fight? But then you forget the snobs.

The tall and broad men with clean complexions and English racing-coats or frock-coats and correct trousers and tall hats — these are the snobs. Do not think that “snob” in French means what it does in English. In Paris a snob is one who is in the movement: it answers more or less to what we lately called “smart,” which word the French, to their delight, have lately discovered. Is it not “the favourite word of the Prince of Wales?”

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For in Paris at present "snobisme" roughly answers to the affectation of English ways.

I have twice had the felicity of meeting a tall young gentleman who wears a yachting cap, a large check knickerbocker suit, a briar pipe, gaiters half box-cloth, half leather, and yellow boots. He is "très snob." The tailors in Paris exhibit such signs as "High Life," "The Sportsman," "The Gentleman," "Piccadilly," and the like: no true snob would have his clothes made by a French tailor. The snob attends to "le bar" at "l'heure de cocktail" as religiously as he takes "le tub" in the morning. After dinner he takes "Buckinan" — or Buchanan: what snob worthy of the name would drink aught but Scottish whisky? It is the snob that started racing in France and keeps it afoot. The snob walks round the paddock and goes to the little depressed ring of bookmakers who are not allowed to call the odds, and backs the outsider — pronounce "ootseedare" — of his fancy. He is of "les racing-men" who play "le polo;" while yet young he practises "le football," "le boxe."

The snob is naturally much chaffed by his fellow-countrymen. But to my mind he might be very much worse employed. Vive le snobisme!

CHAPTER VI

THE RIVALS

WHEN once the Dreyfus case was over the rival factions presently came to wider issues than the guilt or innocence of one man, or even a gang. They take sides according as they hate the army or hate the Jews.

You would say the army, as a whole, — being France, — was hardly a fair mark for hatred. Least of all would you expect Frenchmen to hate it. A military people, fed with traditions of military glory of which almost every street in Paris reminds them, thrilling perceptibly when a regiment but marches down the street — an occurrence of every day, which awakens no kind of emotion in Germany — you would say that France was the last country in the world to go army-baiting.

Yet there are causes at work on the other side. Just because the army is France, because every Frenchman must pass through its ranks, it accu-

mulates much unpopularity. The Socialistic workmen of the towns hate it on principle. The peasants, it is complained, — M. Drumont, the Jew-hater, the army-worshipper, said it himself, — return to their villages diseased in body and mind by the debauches of garrison life, with no respect left for God or woman, spoiled for any productive occupation. For the better-nurtured youth the army is often a purgatory — in French it would be called a Calvary. He is at the mercy of sergeants, and the French sergeant, like all men, and especially all Frenchmen, raised from nothing to a position of small authority, can be a brutal tyrant. Many of them come out of the army with their patriotism utterly dead, and say so openly. Even the keenest old soldiers will tell you that the poor food and intense physical strain involved in turning out finished soldiers, in one, two, or three years, is often physical ruin for the rest of life.

These are not my criticisms, and I have no idea whether or how far they are well grounded: they are all the criticisms of Frenchmen. Not that criticism is exactly the word for the way in which Frenchmen generally put it. Undoubtedly the army has been abused most violently, and is every day; that, you will remember, was the question over which M. Brisson rode for his fall. But

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the hatred of the army — at any rate, the violence with which it finds utterance — is hardly comparable to the hatred of the Jews. How far the masses of the French people really hate them it is hard to say. No Western naturally likes an Oriental — there is always an undefined barrier of mutual repugnance between them ; but that kind of strangeness is nothing like the gnashing fury of your true Parisian anti-Jew.

I do not think it would ever have occurred to the Paris workman by himself to imagine that the Jews are the root of all evil. But it occurred to M. Drumont and others to put the case to him in that light, and he is ready enough to see it. What any sane man expects to effect by the anti-Jewish crusade — other than obvious personal ends — I hardly know. It is quite conceivable that a body of astute men knit together in a close freemasonry, such as undoubtedly unites the Jews, might get excessive power into their hands in a weakly governed country like France. Whether this is likely to be the case at this moment it is practically impossible to tell. That they gave vast sums of money and energy to fight the Dreyfus case was certain ; but that was natural.

However, with reason or without it, the fight against Jews goes on with almost inconceivable ferocity. One of the merry conceits is to spell

Jewish names in a kind of Arabic — such as “Yousouf” for “Joseph” — though why, seeing that a Jew is hardly more an Arab than a Gaul, heaven knows. One enthusiast has suggested compiling a sort of anthology of Jewish crimes, and for the headings of the chapters he sets down every known vice as pre-eminently Jewish. The “Anti-Juif” has a Jewish peerage, and lists of Jews in the army, Jews in foreign trade, Jews in every walk of life. It announces on its front page that “The ‘Anti-Jew’ does not publish Jewish advertisements.”

The statement calls up the delicious picture of the wily Hebrew getting back on his persecutor by using the Anti-Semite organ to increase Semite business. But you soon cease to laugh: it is all comic, but there is too much of it at a time. They even send round an “Anti-Jewish Automobile” in the suburbs of Paris, and the earnest reports of seed sown by the wayside read exactly like paragraphs from the “War Cry.” There are Anti-Jewish cyclists, too; but I scarce know what they do. Only there is too much of it all. By perpetual hammering it becomes cruel, cowardly, vile — like all persecutions.

In the mean time, men who were the fastest friends three years ago have taken different sides, one hating the army and the other hating the Jews,

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and they speak no more to one another. Clubs have had to be broken up, and relatives are become strangers. A second Dreyfus case would compel Paris to choose between barricades and Bedlam.

CHAPTER VII

LA VIE DE LUXE

“ THEN who is it that leads the life of luxury ? ”
I asked.

“ They are filibusters, monsieur,” replied the barber. “ No one knows whence they come nor whither they go. Each year there come new ones, and then they disappear. The year after comes another, with carriages still more gaudy and entertainments still more costly, and giving more splendid jewels to the great *cocottes*. Then he is gone, and the bills are not paid. Yes. They are filibusters, monsieur — but simple filibusters.”

It is quite evident to the merest stranger that among the score of distinct Parises there must be one which is engaged in nothing else but spending and pocketing money. There are certain parts of the world that make their money and spend it ; others that lay themselves out to assist the spending of money made elsewhere. From the Casino of Monte Carlo to the back-street lodging-house at Margate — at some point or other in the scale you

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must know them. Of all the places engaged in this business, the quarter of Paris in the immediate neighbourhood of the Opéra is the chief.

From Petersburg to Buenos Ayres, from Klondike through Jerusalem to Johannesburg, it seems a law of nature that he who finds himself with money should go to Paris to spend it. And Paris devotes her hoard of accumulated civilisation, her taste and tact, her cooks and vintners, her upholsterers and coach-builders, her painters and musicians and playwrights, to make it more easy and agreeable to spend great sums of money in Paris than anywhere else.

Of course you must first find your way to the right Paris. Before ever you start you must get a good travelling servant, and order a carriage from the Ritz Hotel to meet you at the station (for the half-hour's wait at the Customs-house and the *fiacre* jarring over cobbles — the general lot of unmillioned humanity — are sheer barbarism). You will then arrive at the Ritz Hotel. You will be content with it — unless you are spending a very large fortune indeed, in which case you must take a flat somewhere southwest of the Champs Elysées.

The Ritz Hotel is the only one I have yet seen in the world which combines luxury with good taste. It is not plastered with gold nor altogether

— though I think too much — papered with looking-glasses. The colours of your room will probably be dead white and terra-cotta — white walls and doors, terra-cotta carpet — like an old English lawn under-foot — and furniture — good and not too much of it. It has the dignity of the old times and the conveniences of the new. Every room has its bathroom, with all appliances for sanitation and comfort. You can put your electric lamps where you will; you can telephone from the bathroom to your valet; you will never miss an appointment, unless you wish to, because of the pneumatic clock on the wall which is regulated from the central office. Downstairs the place is certainly not so comfortable as home; but that much no hotel ever was. But you can write and read the papers in light and air in the middle of fine furniture. The restaurant is large enough to glitter, and small enough to be well served; the cooking and wines are not the best in Paris, but they are not incomparably below the best.

All monstrous fine, you say, but such splendours are not for us. They were not for me more than a day or two; then I moved into the older, duller, and, I presumed, cheaper hotel. The room was dark, and instead of looking into a sunny garden, stared blankly at the other side of a narrow

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but noisy street. The attendance was tardy, and you had to walk to the other end of a long, electric-lighted passage to your bath. The food — but you don't need to eat either lunch or dinner in a Paris hotel; nobody expects it of you. What you do have to take is your tea or coffee or milk in the morning. I tried them all: the coffee was mostly chicory, the tea mostly tepid water, the quality and quantity of a franc's worth of milk such as you can buy in my neighbourhood at home for a farthing. And the magnificent thing was that this hotel turned out dearer than the Ritz after all.

Now the point of this comparison from the point of view of the *vie de luxe* is that the dearer hotel is what you call a hotel of good standing, much frequented by Americans, whereas the Ritz is the place where you would expect to meet the filibusters of the barber's imagination. And the filibuster place was cheaper than the abode of the demurest American! For that matter, the inhabitants of the Ritz Hotel seemed, in the main, quite respectable people — a little heavily gilt most of them, but not what I should call exactly filibusters. It was a good enough base of operations; but, emphatically, it did not furnish the Heliogabalan delights that must surely be found somewhere in Paris.

I then took to frequenting the Bois de Boulogne and the most sumptuous restaurants. In the Bois the carriages were smart, and the steppers stepped so high that they hardly got along at all. For many years we have imported carriages from France for their lightness and finish; for many years French dealers have been buying the finest pairs from Tattersall's. At Paillard's you could get an excellent dinner, and paid an excellent price for it; but the people were still not filibusters. They were only well-off people dining well. Where was the *vie de luxe*?

At last I found it. At midnight I went to the Café de Paris. Broughams with showy horses stood at the door; one, I observed with wonder, was painted in a kind of basket-pattern of black and yellow. Inside the room was a-dazzle with mirrors, afloat with music, ablaze with jewels. The decorations were gold, the furniture satin. The little supper-tables were almost all full, and people were still crushing in. The waiters were so many and so busy that the room seemed full of them. On my right sat a dark young man of a Greco-Jewish cast of face, wearing his opera hat and eating supper. Revealed beyond him, in brief yet generous visions, were white arms, a white neck and bosom. Under a branching hat appeared a dead-white face with richly reddened lips and

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cheek-bones, and large expressionless eyes underlined with blue-black. Neck and hands twinkled in ripples of light; she could hardly hold her knife and fork for rings. For the rest, she sat rigid: only her eyes moved with the stealthy sidelong glances that mean rivalry and the habit of prey.

Looking round, you became aware that this pair were the type of the whole assembly. Most of the men wore hats, all the women. Most of the men were Jewish, or Greco-Jewish, or Greco-Roman, or something else exotic. Only a few were English or American — among them a couple of English boys stared with wild amazement at everything; by what error had they got there? — and a few more were Russian. They talked steadily, unceasingly, but listlessly, without waiting for replies, saying things, apparently, without having anything to say, eating without appetite, and drinking without thirst.

There was a stir and a rustle; and towards the empty table on my left came a little group, three men and a woman. The *maitre-d'hotel* and a squad of waiters salamed before them. The woman was small, painted and powdered of course, but with a face half pretty vivacity, half low impudence. She slipped out of her heavy fur cloak — seemed to slip out of her clothes altogether; but a glance below the waist showed that she had a

gown on. It was made of a kind of black gauze covered with shining things of the nature of sequins. The cut — but how can I describe the cut? The gown appeared to be glued on to her, for it moulded every line of the body, had no apparent support at the shoulders, and certainly got no purchase on the bosom. Under the arms it was cut away with a sweeping suggestion of nakedness, then reappeared somewhere under the shoulders, and ran down in a V to an inch above the waist. But what she lacked in dress she made up in jewels. A thick collar of pearls with diamond clasps round her throat, strings and strings of pearls hanging down from neck to waist, pearls on her fingers that stood out like chalk stones. She set herself bolt upright, and looked about her — half queen, half gutter-brat, all courtesan. Then with jerky movements, like a canary's, she began hastily eating figs.

I was in luck; I was sitting within a yard of the most fashionable woman in Paris. Paris, as you know, now that the old nobility is extinct or impoverished, and even the Napoleonic families are dying away, finds its fulcrum of fashion in what they call the great *cocottes*. The lady at my side will go to the great man-milliner of the hour — Paccard, or something, he is called at present — and say: “Make me a gown for the Grand Prix

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such as nobody else's." Thereon he creates such a gown, and on it alone he squanders all his genius. It is nothing to her what it costs, for she will easily find a man to pay for it. It is nothing to him how he neglects his other patrons, for he will have everybody coming to him after the Grand Prix for similar adornments. It is nothing to anybody that such a fashion — inevitably loud and vulgar, or it would not be sufficiently noticed — lowers the whole standard of fashion. For in the *vie de luxe* good taste no longer exists. How could it, when its centre is the great *cocotte* — the kind of lady who lives in a flat with three dancing-masters to instruct her and two prize-fighters to amuse her, and whose hair-dresser is such a great man that he refuses to go in by the tradesman's entrance?

The band burst out, and voices from the supper-tables took up the tune — it was "Ta-ra-ra-boom-de-ay" — among them a fresh and clear one from my left. I looked towards the great *cocotte*. At her side ate sulkily a fair and pale young man — a Russian prince, her nominal host. On the other side of the table lolled and smoked two gross men with their hats on, drinking steadily of whisky. There came up a fourth man, rather unsteadily, with a purple face, a limp frilled shirt-front like a night-gown, drooping under turquoise studs, set

in diamonds, the size of a guinea. All three Frenchmen talked steadily, and the Russian, plainly jealous, occasionally joined in. But not one of them took the least notice of the lady. She just sat there, occasionally drinking mineral water, bolt upright, not talking, quite happy, and sang "Ta-ra-ra-boom-de-ay."

The chief of the orchestra, pale, fragile, with unkempt yellow hair and beard, a wonderful contrast to the bloated figures around him, walked round the room playing a violin solo. When they had gipsies here, the leader used to bend down and play his violin into women's ears and send them mad. To-night the filibusters got up, put on their furs, went heavily out. Not one of them — except a bearded, hook-nosed, middle-aged Greco-Jewish filibuster, who joked and shouted and laughed — had seemed to enjoy himself.

CHAPTER VIII

ON MARKET-GARDENING

You can buy French garden-produce in London cheaper than you can in Paris. In summer in London you can buy French lettuce and radishes and none English. French apples, pears, peaches, strawberries, asparagus, artichokes — they are all to be had either earlier or better or cheaper than our own. Why?

The question was suggested very vividly by an exhibition which they were holding in the gardens of the Tuileries. "Chrysanthemums and Fruits" it was called, but under the long marquee was also a collection, small but excellent, of other flowers and of vegetables. The chrysanthemums blazed all down the middle, silver and bronze and gold — and also green. The green chrysanthemum was new to me — a large blossom apparently developed from white: a single flower seemed a monstrosity, but in a bed the effect was novel and brilliant.

The chrysanthemums were as good as, perhaps

better than, ours ; so were the begonias and carnations ; but the insular eye turned naturally towards the grosser products. In the matter of fruit there could be no question at all of French superiority. Grapes, of course, we make no pretensions to grow out of doors ; and, indeed, it would be hopeless to compete with the clusters of Chasselas — perhaps the most beautiful fruit the eye ever lingered on — with their clear green-gold skins, each bearing distinct the brown-gold circle where the sun had kissed. But hothouse grapes also were better than ours — a dozen kinds from filbert-shaped white to great round black — superior whether for variety, size, or for condition, to anything seen with us.

Still, grapes are not a British speciality ; when it came to apples and pears — Alas ! The French were still far, far ahead of us. Here, again, was a wealth of kinds, such as we hardly suspect in England ; but principally striking was the size of the fruit. If they were not grown past goodness they were astonishing, and it is easy to find from experience that the very largest Duchesse d'Angoulême or Cabrill is full of the most delicate flavour.

Of course in France you could not expect to get away without something very French — and here it was in a number of illustrated apples. The

way you illustrate an apple is apparently to paste a bit of paper or something in the shape of the picture on the part that is turned to the sun. When the fruit is ripe you wash it off — and there is your illustration, green on a red ground. Here was a basket of little ruddy apples, each decorated with the Gallic cock; here big paler ones with — can you ask? — the double eagle of Russia. You smiled; but the labour and care which can thus lavish themselves on each individual apple of a crop are not things to laugh at, but to imitate.

But why is the Frenchman now master in such things as these? It is a grief to the patriot as to the glutton, but he can hardly dispute it; and it seemed worth while trying to discover the reason. I knew no market-gardener, and nobody who knew any market-gardener; but I took the train to a station a few miles out of Paris, and began to look for one.

I overtook a short man, in rough black cloth with long arms and legs, and a harsh expression of countenance, and asked him if he could direct me to a school of horticulture which, I had heard, existed in those parts.

“If monsieur will come with me,” he replied civilly, but with no Parisian ostentation of politeness, “I am going that way.”

He went on with great heavy strides across

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muddy accommodation roads, till we came out on to a turnpike, so hard and straight and true that you could well understand how the petroleum tricycle comes to dominate France. Not that anything of the kind polluted the countryside at that moment: you looked out over miles of rolling valley and hillsides mottled with russet and orange woods. The fields between were not pasture, but all market-garden. Fields of cabbages, fields of strawberries, fields of peas — in blossom in mid-November! — walls for fruit, everything was down in fruit and vegetables.

Presently, passing a field of cabbages, I discovered a man at work, going rapidly from plant to plant, apparently half pulling each one up, then changing his mind and going on to do the same to the next. I asked my acquaintance what he was doing. "It is not well," replied he, "that the cabbage should stand upright; otherwise, if rain or snow comes the water stands on them and rots the leaves, or else they burn in the sun. So he is turning them on to their sides, so that the water shall drop off."

"Monsieur is gardener?" I asked.

"But certainly. This is my garden we are passing now. Strawberries, you see, monsieur; but you should see them in the summer."

"What are those for?" I asked, pointing to

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some lean-to straw-plaited shelters among the strawberries.

He seemed, as before, slightly surprised at my innocence. "Why, to carry in the fruit and vegetables if they are gathered in the sun; otherwise they would be spoiled." It was all just as simple and as natural as the way in which he said it; yet I do not seem to notice these little sun-shelters in English market-gardens, nor yet to see people inclining cabbages so that the wet may drop off them. It is not worth the trouble, say we — and buy French produce at Covent Garden.

"It is yonder, monsieur, the school," resumed my friend — by now he had become that. He also sent much fruit and vegetables to England, he explained. "But now," — we had come to a turning — "I must have the honour of bidding you good day. . . . But no, monsieur; it is no trouble, it has been for me a pleasure."

The school of horticulture turned out a branch of a huge pension, training 850 boys in the rudiments and various arts. They directed me, with their unaffected politeness, to the chief of the horticultural division. He proved to be an old priest, making up accounts in a little bare-boarded room with a desk and one chair. He was thin, lantern-jawed, spectacled, his cheeks clothed with two days' grizzled stubble, possessed of an apparently

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limitless and almost unearthly knowledge of the ways of fruits and flowers. Under his charge, he said, he had about eighty boys, mostly sons of gardeners, who paid, on a liberal estimate, £20 a-year for keep and instruction together.

He showed me the apple and pear room : everything is gathered by now, for they find the later varieties mature better indoors than when left on the trees. The fruit lay on the usual shelves, beautifully arranged according to kind and time of ripening, and a little boy in blue smock and trousers was going carefully over it to see what was coming to the precise moment for eating. After that the father begged indulgence, — he had to make up his accounts quickly for the principal's eye ; meanwhile, would I walk round the garden, behaving always as if it were my own ?

One of her Majesty's ships is not more spick and span, more beautifully ordered at every point, than was this kitchen-garden. At this season of falling leaves the walks are like a newly scrubbed deck ; each vegetable-bed was spotlessly clean, and confined exactly to its place in the plan ; the fruit trees climbed up the walls branch for branch, like the model plans in a manual of fruit culture. It was just the very deadest season for garden work, yet the garden was blue-spotted with blouses and trousers, boys any age from thirteen to sixteen, working with only the most general supervision.

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There was not much growing, naturally, but there was enough to learn the secret of French success from; which is care — intelligent and unwearying care. The boys all knew what they were doing and why they were doing it. One was tying up winter lettuce to make heart, and he knew perfectly well that this was a species of its own, and that it was naturally in great demand when the ordinary plant will not grow. Another was replacing big bell-glasses over little groups of seedling spring lettuce already sown and pricked out under shelter for the early crop. Another — it was drawing on to evening — was covering up the frames in which they grow a perpetual succession of radishes, such as you never eat in England. Others were pruning — and here was an example indeed. The French method — having the tree spread out on an espalier or a wall, or radiating from a low stem and growing upright like a many-branched candlestick, so that always every twig can be surveyed at one glance — is to prune so exactly that, with a full-grown healthy tree, every single bud left will bear fruit. The gardener knows the bud that will bear by sight, and he cuts away everything that means only leaf or unfertile flower. Always the idea is not to produce a large crop of small fruit, but a smaller one of large. With vegetables the theory is the same, and the practice.

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They know the theory, and they insist on coming up to it in practice, if industry and ingenuity can do it. They know the markets, and insist on supplying their requirements. That is all. It is quite simple.

CHAPTER IX

A NATION OF SOU-KEEPERS

SOME people live to save their souls ; the Frenchman lives to save his sous. Now a sou is a half-penny.

Napoleon was a great strategist, and one of his masterpieces was the denomination of us as "a nation of shopkeepers" before any of us thought to apply the title to France. For it is to France the phrase ought to apply. Or, if you like, we are a nation of wholesale, and France of retail, shopkeepers. The virtues and vices of the small, the very small, retail trader are exactly the virtues and vices of the French people.

To the untutored British mind this will appear a paradox. To the untutored British mind Paris is a place of pleasure, the town of light, the town of luxury. "Gay Paree" is the catchword of the music-halls. We imagine Paris a whirling paradise of *gommeux*, *jeunesse dorée*, *demi-monde*, *consommateurs*, *cancans*, *grisettes*, *cabinets particuliers*, and all sorts of other unholy delights. But it is not so at all : Paris is a place where they save sous.

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To another variety of untutored Briton, Paris is the city of mind and art. The young painter has an inspiration of the one true way in which pictures should be painted: be it as individual as it will, in Paris he finds other young men working out the same idea. Thought works in Paris like yeast. Schools of poetry succeed each other so fast that boys of twenty are either recognised masters or forgotten fogies. Nowhere is the young genius's hair so long, his tie so wild. But with all this Paris has no real concern at all: Paris remains a place where they save sous.

The life of luxury and the life of intellect are only two out of the hundred facets of Paris. Even in his pleasures and his heresies, moreover, the true Frenchman remains frugal; and the other ninety-eight hundredths of Paris, widely different, unite in the assiduous pursuit and the jealous preservation of the sou.

The sou makes at once the strength and the weakness of France. It inspires industry, intelligent and unremitting thrift, self-denial, wealth. No country ever made such phœnix rises from apparently hopeless overthrow. In 1789, in 1815, in 1870, the world said it had heard the last of exhausted France. Germany was similarly exhausted in 1648 after the Thirty Years' War, Sweden in 1718 after Charles XII. — both sinewy nations,

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yet Germany has recovered only in our times, and Sweden never. But France has sprung up to new life again and again, rich and powerful, within a generation. The enormous strength, the enormous wealth, are founded on the sous which French people earn and do not squander.

But the sou is the bane of France as well as its salvation. Few British people will have realised how strong a part it played in the recent difficulty with this country. One-third of France's exports come to us, and they are very largely such things as silk, gloves, laces, which yield a large profit to the maker; while the fifteenth part of our exports that goes to France is largely raw material on which the profit is small. So far France had all to lose in a war, and it was not penuriousness, it was prudence, which dictated this calculation. But even more than this, perhaps, weighed the consideration of the shopkeepers of Paris. Those who make their living by British and Americans were in despair a month ago; the British and Americans would not come and they would be ruined; their voice was all for peace.

Most of all, the Exhibition of 1900 might make for peace. War would mean its failure — and the loss of so many millions of sous, on which Paris was counting. This is not a question of France as a whole, for the provinces resent the Exhibition,

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which will lead to the spending of much provincial money in the capital; it is merely the sentiment of Paris; yet it had far more weight in the Fashoda question than you would ever suppose. It is a curious ironical realisation of the Prince Consort's aspiration to prevent war by exhibitions. But if you will try to imagine Britain submitting to humiliation—real or supposed—lest she should lose the chance of making money by an exhibition, then you will see which nation is the real shopkeeper.

The same frugality, the whole national mind set universally on small gains, is more than half responsible for the political agonies of France. To-day Government, deputies, press, and army are alike discredited. Why? Because Frenchmen can never be sure that any man's patriotism will be superior to a perquisite or a commission. Hence Wilson, hence Panama, hence the *Affaire Dreyfus*.

But, indeed, you need not hie to the *Quai d'Orsay* or the *Palais Bourbon*. You have only to eat your meal in your restaurant, or walk along the boulevards: at every step you see the passion for money at work. I dined on a day, 't was a Sunday night, at a delicious place with a sanded floor, where you can get one of the best dinners in the world for 5s., and a bottle of the very best burgundy for 3s. 4d. It is in a business quarter, this restaurant, and the men who lunch there by day bring their ladies to

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dine. There came in two young men in evening coats and white waistcoats, and two ladies, one, it seemed, a *fiancée*, the other a wife; she led one child, and was apparently intending to reinforce the drooping population of France still further.

The party sat down at a double table and ordered — two portions. The men took these on to their plates; the women had nothing. But the men, on receiving each course, cut off little bits and put them aside on their plates. I wondered what for — till suddenly one of the ladies seized her fork, harpooned a bit from the opposite plate and placidly ate it. Having dealt thus with a bit of meat, they ordered one portion of chicken among the party. The quarter-bird was solemnly carved up by the waiter, divided between two plates, and the ladies' share was again harpooned. As for the baby, it was regaled with bread, gravy, and salad. And so the five people consumed one dinner and a half with great satisfaction, gave the waiter twopence for the lot, and went away with the consciousness of duty done. Had they not saved money?

But if you really wish to save sous, go and eat at the Restaurant Duval. This is the A B C shop of France — only, as the Frenchman has a roll and butter for his breakfast, he is obliged to eat a little more for his lunch. The Frenchman

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admires these institutions, and eats at them; the Englishman admires them, and eats elsewhere. There are about twenty *Établissements Duval*, all in admirable positions, all over Paris, and one of them looks clean. Into this one I ventured one day.

As you go in a sort of turnkey at the door gives you a card, or score-sheet. It is characteristically arranged, not according to foods, but according to prices; as you eat, the waitress fills up— one 40 centimes, two 10 centimes, and so on. I tried hard to run up a big score, and ate all the most expensive things I could see on the card. I ate, and ate, and ate till I was ashamed to occupy the seat longer; at the door I found I had spent 1s. 10½d. I doubt whether so much had ever been spent there before— only I was very, very nearly as hungry as when I came in. The Duval, in my experience, is a snare. The food is not nice, and it is not filling at the price. But the Parisian eats of it with joy and saves his sou.

If it were only not worse than that! But on every pound of meat, every pint of oil, every ton of coal, every roll, every egg that comes into a French house the servant gets commission— a sou in every franc. It is even so with the washing-bill—and mark that the *bonne's* clean caps and aprons are provided by the mistress. It is remarked that the *bonne's* caps and aprons soil remarkably fast. Similarly the beef never returns

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to the table, the widow's cruse is quickly empty, the coal vanishes, the rolls are too stale to eat, the eggs break. Housekeeping is very much dearer in Paris than in London, and servants return to their villages with dowries.

Everybody you come across is scraping up sous. Buy a penny bunch of violets on the boulevard and pay with half a franc. It is even money: the flower-girl will slip a sou between three pennies by way of change; thereby she stea — saves a sou. The very respectable, crape-veiled lady on the tramcar, who puts her child on the seat beside her to keep somebody else out, will catch it up on to her knee as the conductor appears, and pay for one place only. Three sous to the good! Everywhere you will find waiters, tradesmen, cashiers systematically passing bad coin; by this means as much as five or even ten sous can be saved at a time. Everybody is saving sous; everybody is grasping, mean, dishonest.

No: that is exaggerated. It would be as absurd to say that everybody in France is dishonest as to say that everybody in England is honest. But it is no exaggeration to say that whereas in England honesty is the rule, in France — at least towards foreigners — it is the exception. France has a dozen virtues which we lack; but common honesty, which to our mind is the beginning of virtue, France has not. Instead, she has sous.

CHAPTER X

WHAT AILS HER ?

THERE is something very wrong with France. Foreigners say so, Frenchmen say so ; therefore that much must be admitted. Only, what ?

It is not merely that nobody has any confidence in the Government, the Chamber, the Army, the Church. It is not merely that nobody has any confidence in his neighbour. The amazing thing is that nobody seems to have any confidence in himself. Some profess confidence in a vague entity called France — meaning by that, apparently, not so much the mass of Frenchmen, as a kind of natural growth and recuperation which has always brought France out of her troubles, and is trusted to do so again. But everybody leaves it for France to do by herself without the aid of Frenchmen.

There are half-a-dozen symptoms to be gathered from a single morning's newspapers. A turn in foreign politics, let me say, looks unfavourable. Instead of looking inward to her own strength, France looks outward for allies, — Germany, if you like, the generation's enemy — but anything rather than

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be left alone. A nation offends them: "Cowards!" they cry; "some day you shall pay for this." The influence of the Jews is in question: half the voice of Paris is nervous silence, the other half is not less nervous hysteria. That the Anglo-Saxon means to destroy the Latin is no longer doubted; and instead of defying him, Paris asks what it is that makes him her superior.

And—a worse symptom than any of these: M. Henri Rochefort will tell you, it may be, that the Government is in possession of certain important facts acquired by opening at the frontier the private, the very intimate, correspondence of the German Ambassador's daughter. It is a silly story, you say; but it is not too silly to be copied into every paper in Paris. The thing actually occurred; and the astounding thing was that to not one single paper—that I could find—did it seem to occur how blackguardly, and at the same time how abject, must be a Government that could take such measures for its security. Some believed the story, some doubted; all tacitly agreed that it was natural that a Government should do such things. Afterwards, as I heard the story, Count von Münster had to go down to the Quai d'Orsay and point out, not for the first time, that unless such stories were officially denied he would be obliged to remove to a country where public

men behaved like gentlemen. On this the Government denied the fable — saying, vaguely, that it had been published in the press, and not daring to accuse, much less to punish, M. Rochefort as author of the fairy tale.

If you start, though, to detail the weakness of the French Government, you will never be done. The whole series of irritations inflicted on this country during the last few years is due to nothing else. Its author has been the Colonial party. Now the Colonial party in France is weak, but it is just stronger than the Government. It is not the Foreign Office, but men like Prince d'Arenberg, that send out the Mizons and the Marchands; the Government fears the inevitable complications, but dares not risk attack by a "No."

As for the interior policy of France, it is just an equilibrium of weaknesses. Orleanists, Buonapartists, Republicans, Socialists, Church, Army — they all hold each other in check, because not one of them has a policy or a man. Either would do; not one of the groups can produce either. Not so many years ago it took at least a general, like Boulanger, to threaten a *coup d'état*; now men talk openly of a Marchand — a junior major, and the son of a carpenter.

Then is France utterly hopeless? You would say so, out of her own mouth. Hardly a French-

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man has still a word left for his Government; some go further. I have heard it declared that all the manliness is gone out of French people, partly by reason of absinthe, and partly by reason of precocious amours. But that is a very sweeping indictment to bring against a whole people. Drunkenness, they say, is ominously increasing in France; but it is hardly yet a national vice. As for the other thing, it is not easy to judge. From the look of the place you would say its morality was a sink. The only way to take the legendary English Miss to Paris would be to meet her at the station in a shuttered brougham, to drop her, in blinkers, at a Duval for lunch, and then off to the nearest convent. But you must not judge altogether by books and pictures. It is possible to be moral without being abashed, and the opposite of that is what the French mean by British hypocrisy. Certainly the French take irregularities much more easily than we do: but are they, therefore, more irregular?

It does not follow at all. I think probably they are, somewhat, but not nearly so much as we think. And, for a case in point, whatever may be the physical result of French excesses, they never succeed in smirching French tenderness for children. Not merely in fathers and mothers is it exhibited; French children are never dirty,

never dowdy (which speaks for the mother), but the veriest *roué* is always ready to let any infant pull his nose and tip his new silk hat into the gutter. *Bébé* is the king of Paris.

So far — we are only skating over a subject fit for a dozen volumes — why should France despair of herself? All that is happening, say keen observers, is that France is leading the march of civilisation. In France, perhaps more than in any country, you will meet people who will say: “No; I am not patriotic”; as one might say: “I do not ride a bicycle.” People affirm that this comes of a further advance in civilisation than other nations have yet made. It could not be called cosmopolitanism in the ordinary sense, for few French people know anything of any country but their own; it might be called so in the correcter sense — Citizenship of the World.

Yet not citizenship either; for the tendency of modern Paris is not towards anything political. Hardly: when people will tell you they are governed by knaves or fools, or both; when their nearest approach to a statesman is a toy Brutus like M. Cavaignac. The truth is that Paris no longer sees anything important in politics. The Dreyfus affair might have interested or even excited for one day; it fell on callous ears the next. A political nation would have settled it

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years before ; France ended the problem in her own most characteristic fashion.

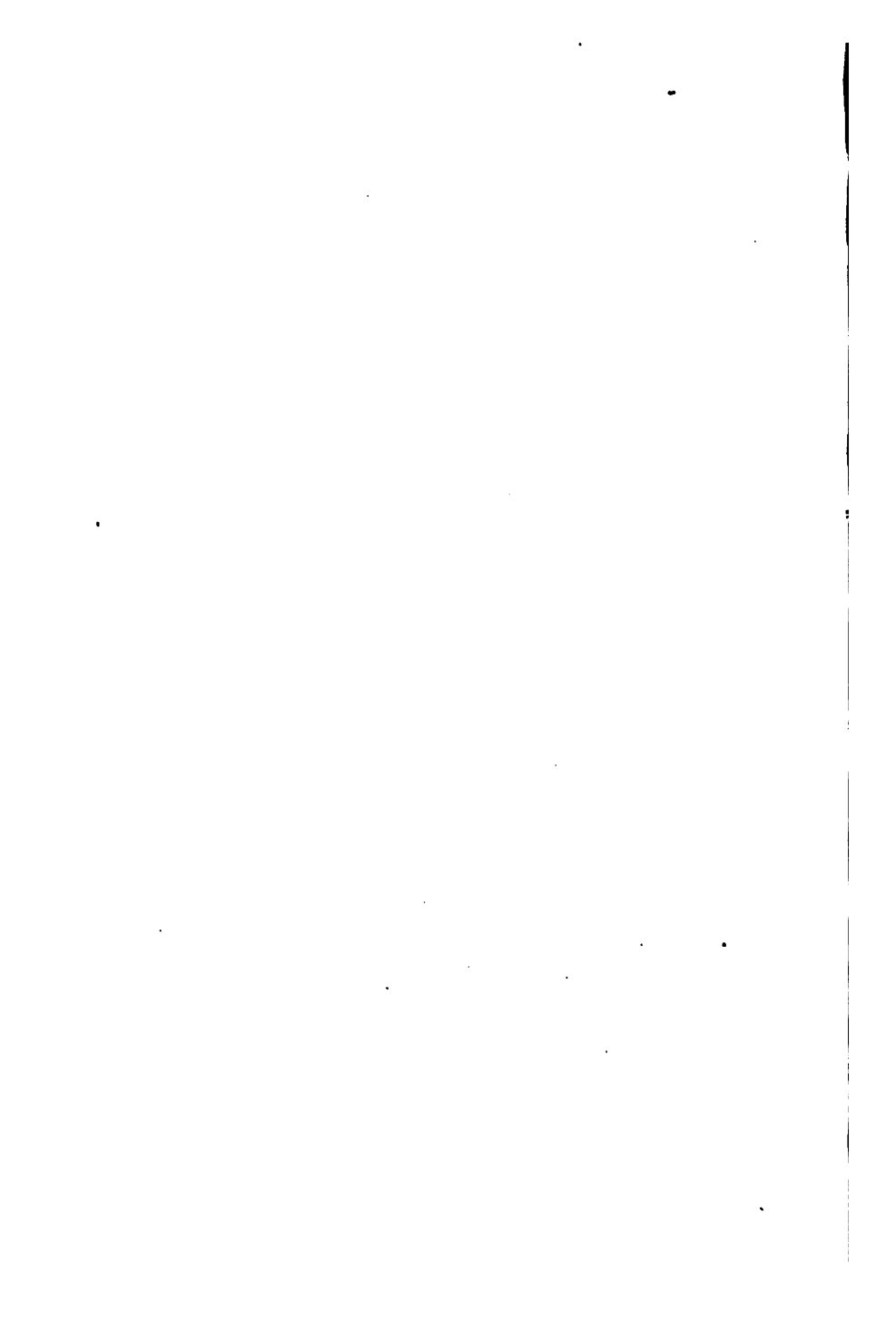
Frenchmen do not want to rule — they want to live. The pursuit of life, of laughter, of charming sensations, of intelligent apprehensions, of individual development of character — it may all be more important, more vital to human existence than the preoccupation to rule oneself and others, to make laws and to fight. Only this you can say both from history and from common-sense: that if one nation thus abandons the political life while other nations still pursue it, the solitary nation, sooner or later, will suffer from the pressure of the others. France survived Sedan and survived the Commune ; but unless she reverts to politics there must in the long-run come Sedans and Communes which she will not survive.

Meantime the Parisian promenades his miniature Japanese dog through the courtyard of the Louvre, and jingles his petroleum tricycle in the shadow of the Colonne Vendôme. He is quite civilised and quite content. The men who built the palace and set up the column were not ; but the Parisian is not the less satisfied with himself. Has not he also built the Exhibition of 1900 ?

Part III

BERLIN

**IMPRESSIONS OF GERMANY AND THE
GERMANS**



Berlin



CHAPTER I

IN THE KAISER'S COUNTRY

IT needs no customs-house to tell you that you have come into Germany. You are in a new atmosphere — an atmosphere of order, of discipline, of system, rigidly applied to the smallest detail. The officials carry themselves stiffly, and seem to live with their heels together at attention. I must own at once that they have been far more civil than I seem to remember them in the past: whether it is that the newer generation of Prussian non-commissioned officer has improved his manners, or that I have improved mine, must be left for other criticism to decide. But, civil or not, they know exactly what it is their duty to do, and they do it exactly. The railway stations are almost exactly alike — roomy, airy, spotlessly clean, but painfully naked brick and glass. No adver-

tisements are allowed in German stations: they belong to the Government, and anything smacking of enterprise in the individual must be kept far from them. Even the name of the station is usually wanting, or else inscribed somewhere high up, and on the side of the wall where only the engine-driver can see it. The passenger is not expected to know for himself when he gets to his destination. He is in charge of the guard, and must so leave himself, like a corpse in the hands of his superior.

Hanging in the railway carriage, as like as not, you will find a little blue-paper-covered book with directions for railway travelling. The directions cover several closely printed pages, and deal with every branch of the subject, from the time you *must* arrive at the station to the precise circumstances in which the window *may* be let down. If you have not got your baggage ready to be booked a quarter of an hour before your train is due to start, then you must wait for the next. No bundling in at the last moment for methodical Germany. You must not get in or out until the guard tells you. It is not, I fancy, punishable to open the door of your carriage yourself, but there is a bolt at the very bottom of the door, and if you try to lean out and open it yourself, you stand a fair chance of taking a header on to the plat-

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form. The very vocabulary of the guard seems contrived to impress on you that you are not a person but only a part of a system. "Everything get in," "Everything get out," is the literal translation of his commands.

Arrived at Berlin, you find a porter who takes your luggage-ticket and goes off to get your luggage at the proper counter: no picking up your bags off the platform for orderly Germany. "Go to the right," says one notice; "Have tickets ready," says another. These notices use an infinite imperative, as being the most impersonal grammatical form known; you are not a person so much as the object of a direction. A policeman gives you a metal ticket with the number of the cab you are to take: no picking a likely-looking horse in Germany. In the cab are the rules and regulations for taking a cab. So they are in ours, no doubt; but what a lesson in precision is the Berlin notice, with the tariff for day and night, the tariff for so much baggage over so many kilogrammes' weight, the tariff for every circumstance that may occur. Disputes with your driver are not encouraged in seemly Germany. There are three kinds of cab in Berlin. The station cab is intended for much luggage; besides this there are the first-class and the second-class cabs. Each has its own tariff, and though the

drivers of each must wear the blue coat and red waistcoat of the regulation livery, the first-class man must wear a white hat and the second-class man a black. The police sees to that. It also lays down how many and what kind of blankets the cab-horse is to wear in summer and winter respectively. But Berlin's latest triumph in cabs is the taxameter. There is a little bracket with the word "Free" which the cabman hangs out when he is disengaged. When you get in you find yourself opposite a little dial. As the driver takes in his "Free," the dial starts off. It takes note of every revolution of the wheels, and as these alter the fare, the addition is shown on the dial. When you get out you read off the amount of the fare; there is nothing to prevent you giving the driver more if you like, but there can be no possibility of a dispute.

Installed in your hotel, you go out for a walk. As you walk you notice a number of kiosks up and down the street; you say to yourself that they exist for advertisements. So they do, but look at the advertisements. They tell you what is going on at the theatres, or where there is music and dancing. But round the post you will find even more characteristic announcements. They tell you the nearest ambulance, the nearest hospital, the nearest fire-alarm, the nearest police-

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station. And on every other one is a clock, with the correct official time. No not knowing where, no not knowing when, in well-ordered Germany.

You want perhaps to send a packet of manuscript to England. You do it up in brown paper and string, with the ends open, and take it to the post-office. There is one way in and another way out, and a policeman stands by to see that you take the right one. In the vestibule there is a plan of the post-office: it is a prodigiously big building. In Cologne, for example, or Frankfurt-on-the-Main, the post-office shames St. Martin's-le-Grand. In every tiniest hamlet the post-office is as big as the rest of the place put together, till you wonder where the Government gets all the officials to fill it, and what it finds for them to do. You must study the plan of the post-office till you find the right door and counter for what you want. You find it, and take up your packet. "Can this go by letter-post?" "No; it is too big." "Can it go by book-post?" "No; it is not printed matter." "Can it go by parcel-post?" "No; it is not well enough fastened up." "Then how can it go?" The uniformed official contemplates the covering packet and then looks in the book of regulations. "It must be wrapped up in oil-skin, sealed, and provided with a blue wrapper." "But, in England ——" The official relaxes to

a smile: "Yes, in England; but here we are more precise. Oil-skinned, sealed, and blue-wrapped must it unconditionally be."

You slink dejectedly out to look for an oil-skin shop, a sealing-wax shop, and a blue-label shop. Perhaps after all, though, it will be cheaper in the long-run to give it to the hotel porter to look after. A life of constant storm and stress has accustomed the hotel porter to grapple with regulations. But what the German does in such cases I would rather not imagine. Happily, he is blessed with a good head for details, and takes an unending pleasure in learning them. He will dispute for hours over a figure in a time-table or a phrase in a police regulation with never-flagging enjoyment; so that I suppose a German who wants to send a parcel to England first buys a book of rules, then gives the matter a week of looking up and thinking out and talking over, then reconnoitres the post-office, then solemnly buys oil-skin and sealing-wax and blue-label, calls his wife and children to bear a hand in the preparation of the sacred packet, and finally leads them in triumphant procession, with a note of the weight in his pocket and the exact fee wrapped up in paper, to the right door, the right counter, and the right pigeon-hole, and then triumphantly posts it. Then he goes out to meet his friends over a glass of beer, and fights his post-

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parcel o'er again. Yet with all exceptions granted, you have to own that there is no perplexity, no confusion, no disorder. Everything fixed, definite, regulated — for the most part practically and common-sensibly regulated. In Germany somebody has always arranged things for you. “All right” is the national cry of the Englishman all the world over; the German for it is, “Alles in Ordnung” — “Everything in order.” But “All right” usually means that things will do as they are; “Alles in Ordnung” means that they are as somebody up above has ordained that they shall be.

CHAPTER II

THE KAISER'S CAPITAL

“BERLIN! The beastliest capital in Europe!” That was the encouraging testimonial of a friend who spent a fortnight there five-and-twenty years ago. But when I came to Berlin I stared and rubbed my eyes in astonishment. These broad streets, streaming with life, these stately palaces, these rich shops, gorgeous hotels, luxurious houses, endless wooded parks, lavish pleasures for the allurements of every sense — this the beastliest capital in Europe? Then try me with the finest!

The other cities of Germany — I do not speak of Austria — are always possible to live in, and sometimes even agreeable; but they are not brilliant. They all have their solid qualities; and such necessities of life as food, beer, tobacco, and theatrical entertainments can be bought in them at consistently ridiculous prices. Munich lays itself out more for art, Hanover is healthier, Frankfurt is the heart of a more romantic country, Hamburg is gemmed with lagoons, Cologne has a fairer

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building and a fairer river, Nürnberg offers the piquancy of trolley-cars gliding between fourteenth-century gables and frescoes. Berlin is a rather tasteless, rather unhealthy city, standing in the middle of a rather featureless plain, on a decidedly dull and insignificant river, and presenting no architectural or historical features of more than ordinary interest. And yet Berlin is emphatically and unmistakably one of the great cities of the world.

Berlin has elements of both progress and order, frugality and splendour. The progress, it is true, is very orderly, and the splendour is somewhat frugal — which is to say that both are German. Progress, indeed, is confined to the material side: you would not come to the Kaiser's capital for the latest feature in social evolution. But in many of the little comforts of life Berlin is long strides ahead of London. Some French writer or other has found it more like an American than a European city; superficially he was right. The excellence of the communications, the ingenious little electrical trifles that every hour save five seconds' unnecessary exertion, the wealth of telephones, the development of the penny-in-the-slot automaton, the tendency to economise in every kind of business by simplifying, by reducing to one price — it all suggests Broadway, just as much as the dis-

position of foot-passengers to push the stranger off the pavement without apology, and the apparent determination of tram-conductors and cab-drivers to knock him down and drive over him. For the first half-hour Berlin is not at all unsuggestive of New York.

But beneath the surface Berlin is not like New York in the very least. A new time-saver or labour-saver will be welcomed readily enough when the police has passed it — but you had better not try it before. Install a tramway down every other street, certainly — but you had better not forget the exact specifications as approved by the police. Electric cars and elevated railways are very excellent things — only no patentees or shareholders are allowed to disfigure the Kaiser's streets by running up overhead wires or overhead rails along them. The tramway company may want this or that; but if the police, or the town council, or a higher authority yet, should prefer that or this — that or this it has got to be. Telephones, if you like, but you will not find the State in Germany giving its rights and duties away together to a company. A penny-farthing fare for any five stations on the elevated railway, by all means — only not the simple and logical conclusion of one fare and one class for any distance, for then the officer and the private would have to travel in the

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same carriage. And if you are driven over in the street, a policeman will always come and make a note of it in his note-book, and probably the driver will be punished. You might prefer that the policeman should prevent your death instead of avenging it, but that is not the method of Berlin. The policeman is not there to prevent misconduct, he is there to write down particulars of it in a book, and see that it is made hot for somebody next morning. And as for throwing people into the gutter, well, if you tend to imagine yourself in New York instead of in Berlin, try it with an officer. If a civilian stops in mid-pavement — as the German has a way of doing, being apparently unable to walk and think at the same time — the people behind do not go round him, nor ask him to get on; they just push him on. But if you push an officer, and do not apologise, it is not merely his right but his duty to draw his sword and wound or even kill you. You have insulted the king's coat in public, and the man who does not wash out the insult in the only possible way may as well send in his papers at once, before he is asked to resign.

The streets of Berlin are an epitome of the history of Prussia. Go and stand at the eastern end of Unter den Linden and you will begin to realise it. All round you is a coronet of public buildings,

not surpassed for stateliness anywhere outside Paris and Vienna. But notice that as they are younger, so they become more pretentious. The old buildings are solid and sometimes large, but they are modest; they are not very high; they are — all but the Kaiser's Castle — made of simple stone. If they are beautiful, they are beautiful simply in virtue of the lines traced by the architect. They are fine, but they are not more ambitious than those you see in almost any little German town which ever sheltered a little German Court — Wurzburg, for instance. In their day Prussia was but a German State among its equals. Then walk back along the Linden, and look at the new Reichstag! It is all ablaze with gilt; the roof, and porches, and walls are as thick with florid statuary — goddesses, knights, angels — as a treacle tree is thick with moths at night-fall. Look at the Victory column opposite: it crawls with trophies and allegorical figures, and on the top is a gilt goddess, so enormous that you hurry past lest the column should snap under her. Look at the monument to the old Kaiser: the colossal bronze figures seem as if they must smash the marble pedestal to pieces under their prodigious weight. Everything of the Imperial epoch in Berlin is double life-size; almost everything is gilt.

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It would require a very magnificent city indeed to carry off these tons of bronze and acres of gold-foil. And for all its progress Berlin has not yet quite grown out of the frugal, pinching, half-capital, half-provincial habit of its earlier life. Its electric accumulator tramcars are the most palatial imaginable, but its omnibuses, with people swarming like bees on to their heavy knifeboards, are clumsy abortions, and seem purposely designed for the torture of the scraggy horses. There is a vast deal of German simplicity left amid the gorgeousness at Berlin. The Thiergarten is a park unmatched for cool greenery in any city of the world; you can walk under trees in it for miles and miles. But no influence can make a Corso, a Hyde Park, a Bois de Boulogne of it: you see fashionable people swelling with pride behind a horse, a harness, and a groom that a self-respecting farmer would be ashamed to show at market. There is a music-hall in Berlin more sumptuous than any I ever saw in any country — eighteen turns, including songs, ballet, cinematograph, jugglery, acrobats, knockabouts, *poses plastiques*, and circus-riding, with Anna Held, Marie Lloyd, and German and Italian Marie Lloyds thrown in. Berlin divides its affections between such Cræsus splendours as this and restaurants where you cannot pay more than a penny-farthing for anything.

There are half-a-dozen such already, to say nothing of a penny-in-the-slot restaurant — very popular because, as its patrons unaffectedly point out, you do not have to tip the waiter.

The Kaiser's capital is a queer jumble. But the queerest thing in it is technically outside it — the Mausoleum at Charlottenburg, wherein rest the bodies of Friedrich Wilhelm, the liberator of Germany from Napoleon, of the beautiful Queen Louise, who died of a broken heart for Germany, and of the first Kaiser and his consort. The present Kaiser charges you twopence-halfpenny to view the tombs of his ancestors. But that is not all. At the portal stands a cheap angel, with a gilt sword of flame, as if the Mausoleum were the Garden of Eden, or as if the Kaiser could call on the heavenly hosts to act as supernumerary policemen. And on the marble effigies of his fathers, of the men who built up this great and wonderful empire of Germany — the light can only fall through panes of cheap violet and yellow glass. It is said to be intended to make the figures look more like real corpses. The holiest heroes of Prussia are haloed in the vulgar light of a penny gaff. Berlin can be dazzling, but it can also be very tawdry. The Kaiser's city is something of a parvenu among capitals after all.

CHAPTER III

THE KAISER

It was noon on the day of the great autumn parade, when the garrison of Berlin marched past the Kaiser, on the field of Tempelhof. Since nine o'clock the upper windows of the restaurants in Friedrich Strasse had been black with patient beer-drinkers; since ten the streets had been fringed with hardly less patient bystanders; by now both sides of the pavement were lined two deep. As you looked down the long stretches of kerbstone they were corniced with solid German toes, and dotted with parcels which the weary had set down in the gutter at their feet while they waited. Here and there a child, or a servant girl, patiently rolled and unrolled a penny paper flag with a highly coloured picture of his Majesty. Up and down the street strolled patient hawkers of penny parade-souvenir post-cards.

They were waiting: why should they not wait? They had come to see their Emperor, but they had no claim to see him, — that they knew very well.

In England on such an occasion things would have been arranged for the convenience of the sight-seers; in Germany they were arranged for the convenience, first, of the army; secondly, of those who had business to do. The troops marched, not by the route where people were assembled to look on, but by different streets, so as to get them most quickly and conveniently back to barracks. The omnibuses and waggons were not kept off the street till the last moment. If a detachment was marching by they were turned off at one corner, and allowed to come back at the next the moment the street was clear again. The force of police was not very large, but it was very efficient. One stretch of street after another was closed just at the last possible instant, and opened at the first possible instant again.

Already three companies had gone by — two of Foot Guards, one of Grenadiers, in tall sugar-loaf hats, brass in front, scarlet cloth behind, with a queer suggestion of a bishop's mitre. But that was three-quarters of an hour ago; where tarried the Kaiser? Generals and colonels had ridden by, radiant in blue and scarlet, with almost more medals and crosses than the coat could carry, though sitting their horses, too often, more like sacks of flour than horsemen. But where was the Kaiser? As the people waited they talked in a

half-whisper — no German ever speaks of the Kaiser quite aloud: it is imprudent — of his ways; how one day he will put himself at the head of this company and another of that, one year will hurry past with the leading squadron, and another will make a tardy appearance at the tail of an endless line of guns. The Empress and the young princes were past hoping for already. They must have gone by a back way, as the Empress loves to do when people are waiting to get a sight of her. They say in Berlin that this is her way of avenging herself when she has had a tiff with her lord. It would be politer to believe that it is a retiring nature asserting itself somewhat tactlessly. In either case, the dignified courtesy towards loyal subjects which we expect and receive from our Royal people in England finds no place in the German conception of the duties of sovereignty.

Meanwhile the Kaiser — but listen! There is music coming; it must be he at last. Down the street you can see the handkerchiefs dancing in the windows. The Germans round me unrolled their penny portraits, loosened their hats, and prepared to wave and cheer. Here he comes just after the band; there, in the dark blue general's uniform and yellow ribbon! "Hoch, hoch, hoch, hurrah!" There was no mistaking it; the Kaiser was getting a splendid reception. From every window, every

balcony, every house-top, and from the back ranks on the pavement, burst handkerchiefs and hats, and deep-chested "Hochs," without number.

And between the walls of acclamation came riding the Kaiser. A man of middle size, sitting constrainedly and bold-upright; a dead yellow skin, hard-pencilled brows, a straight, masterful nose, lips jammed close together under a dark moustache pointing straight upward to the whites of his eyes. A face at once repulsive and pathetic, so harsh and stony was it, so grimly solemn. A face in which no individual feature was very dark, but which altogether was black as thunder. He raised his gloved hand in a stiff mechanical salute, and turned his head impassively from left to right; but there was no courtesy in the salute, no light in the eye, no smile on the tight mouth for his loyal subjects. He looked like a man without joy, without love, without pity, without hope. He looked like a man who had never laughed, like a man who could never sleep. A man might wear such a face who felt himself turning slowly into ice.

He was gone again, and the crowd was flooding the street behind him. "Ach," sighed an old lady in crape, "pity that he always looks so cross. So different from our dear, dear old Kaiser." And I saw more than one grey head shake as she spoke, not angrily, but with a kindly and even touching

regret. But all the older men are not quite so sparing in their condemnation. The young — I am speaking now only of the well-to-do — are often ecstatic in their admiration: he is German through and through, they will tell you; he means to make Germany the only nation on earth, they tell you, though they do not tell you how. Even their elders will own that he is a rousing speaker. “He hits the nail on the head; his speeches thrill us all through when we read them in the newspapers.” Then, perhaps, they will tell you an anecdote of his readiness. One day as he rode through a by-street he came on a score of Socialistic workmen. Eighteen took off their caps reluctantly, two remained covered. Whereon the Kaiser rode straight up, and saluted them till their caps came off for shame, if not for loyalty.

That was well and kingly done. But that is almost the only action I have heard of him which might win his people’s personal love. The young may admire him and trust in him, but he is not the beloved sovereign his grandfather was — not even what his father was. The old Kaiser came to his study-window every morning of his life to greet his people; the present Kaiser began by shutting a gate of the Royal palace that had always stood open. It was a small thing, but it was noticed. The old Kaiser and Unser Fritz had a

smile and a cheery word for the meanest of their subjects; this Kaiser has sometimes a machine-made salute, and always a scowl. He seems to despise his people, and even the Germans dislike too obvious a show of scorn, even in a Kaiser. What has he done? they ask. His father and grandfather had done great things for Germany; this man has talked much and done nothing.

Perhaps, even more than the simple courtesy of the old Kaiser, the Germans loved his simple tastes. They are a homely people, and they loved to think that their Emperor was homely like them. But the present Kaiser — observe that they hardly ever speak of him but as “the present Kaiser,” and the implied comparison is telling — is all for luxury, display, extravagance. His income — all paid by the light-soiled kingdom of Prussia: Germany as an empire contributes nothing — is the enormous sum of 15,000,000 marks, or £750,000; yet he is said to be deep in debt. And at each new piece of ostentation people shake their heads, and have already begun to ask who pays.

In the evening of that day I saw the Kaiser again. There was a State performance at the opera for the King of Siam, and the house was decorated with a simple good taste which shamed the luxuriance of Covent Garden on gala nights. In the first eight rows of stalls or so sat only

officers; the ladies had to scramble for the back seats as they liked. The whole house, from floor to upper gallery, shone with orders and uniforms. The ballet was to begin at eight and end at nine. But eight o'clock came, five-past, a quarter-past, half-past, and the Royal box was still empty. If punctuality be the politeness of princes, this was an unmannerly prince indeed. At last a chamberlain, or something, came to the front of the Royal box and tapped thrice with his wand. The whole house rose. Then appeared the Kaiserin — plain, plump, not interesting — on the arm of the little yellow King of Siam. Behind came the Kaiser. Stiffly he moved to the front of the box; stiffly he brought his heels together and drew himself up. He seemed to bring himself into position in pieces; you could see him squaring his shoulders; you could see him inflating his chest. Then, with a fixed unmoving face, he pushed his head forward perhaps two inches; that was his salute. A king who cannot smile is bad; a king who cannot bow is worse.

He fixed himself very bolt upright and stared unwinking straight before him at the stage. The curtain went up and the ballet began; the Kaiser still sat without moving a muscle, a face and a figure like that of a statue. Now and again the King of Siam's questions became too insistent; the

Kaiser bent over for a moment, as if he had one joint in the middle of his back, and then drew back to the jointless graven image. Once he turned to somebody behind him, and I hoped he laughed. Laughter on that face would be like moist grass in a desert.

It was over. The Kaiser rose, squared his shoulders, inflated his chest, pecked at his people, and went. The last I saw of him he was giving his arm to a princess: he looked like a coloured plate out of a book of etiquette. I wondered vaguely whether he ever unbends enough to get his clothes off.

CHAPTER IV

THE HANOVERIAN QUESTION

In the year 1866 Hanover was ruled by George V., grandson of George III. and first cousin of the Queen. King George was quite blind, yet he always walked straight forward, very fast, and without swerving. That was the measure of his character : he was brave, accomplished, courteous, stately, in all things a gentleman and a king, and all his people loved him. But the war of 1866 brought him into collision with Prussia and Bismarck. There was a battle of Langensalza ; the blind king led his troops into action, and the Hanoverians had the advantage. But in the night, under cover of an evaded armistice, the Prussians brought up 50,000 men, and the Hanoverians had to capitulate. King George rode off the field a king no longer ; the Prussians appropriated his furniture and personal effects, and Hanover became a province of Prussia.

Thence arose the Hanoverian question. It is thirty years old now. King George's heir, the Duke of Cumberland, lives quietly at Gmunden,

maintaining a faint claim on his father's throne, but otherwise the most passive of all European pretenders. Prussia has had a generation to Prussianise Hanover. To most Englishmen it may be news that there is a Hanoverian question at all. And yet there is: the Guelph party is very far from dead, though you seldom hear of it outside Germany. But just because you hear little of it, because it is somnolent, a mere party of protest, with no definite programme and no visible end, it may be worth while to make a ten minutes' examination of it. To all appearance Hanover is as much an integral part of Prussia as Pomerania or Brandenburg; if, therefore, in Hanover you still find gnawing discontent and detestation of the Kaiser's rule, what may you not look for elsewhere?

In the town of Hanover they will tell you that there are no Guelphs and no Hanoverian question party left. And, as regards the town of Hanover, that is very likely true. I have talked with "good Hanoverians," as they call themselves, in the town; but most of the middle class have Prussianised into National Liberals — which is the German analogue of Liberal Unionists, or Moderate Conservatives — while the working classes, as everywhere, are Social Democrat almost to a man. The town sends a Socialist member to the Reichstag. When

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you ask why Hanover is Guelph no longer, the answer is simple enough. The German empire pays. The annexation to Prussia was unquestionably unpopular at first : but Hanover has had its full share of the material prosperity which has followed it. In 1866 the town was merely a little dead-and-alive capital, like a dozen other capitals of divided Germany. All the tradesmen were by royal letters patent; everything depended on the Court. I have not the figures of the population by me, but it is safe to put it inside 50,000. Now Hanover is a great and thriving town : with its Salford, the neighbouring manufacturing borough of Linden, it counts over 250,000 inhabitants. It is the rest of the great military riding-school of the Prussian army; and the cavalry officers who go there for a two-years' course are alone more than sufficient to console the tradesmen for the loss of the Court. Hanover is administered on the German plan, of course with a rigidity no English town would tolerate for a fortnight; but, granted the German plan, the administration is admirable beyond all praise. The relics of the monarchy have mostly been turned to institutions for the public good: the Welfenschloss is a technical school; its gardens are thrown open for the recreation of the citizens. The Government, as everywhere, does its utmost, even to the minutest details,

to ensure safety, the material comfort, and the moral virtue of its subjects.

Yet mark that Hanover has ceased to be Legitimist only to become Social Democrat. From the Government's point of view it has passed from one extreme of wrongness only to come out at the other. Dissatisfaction has changed its name, but not its nature. Why? Mainly, no doubt, this is part of the general trend of the German working man towards Socialism, of which more in its proper place. But besides this there seems to be another cause at work peculiar to Hanover. You must remember that German patriotism is not the simple solid sentiment that you meet in England, in France, in Russia.

United Germany is too young for it. A generation back, you must remember, Germany was a geographical expression. Then the Prussian's patriotism was for Prussia, the Saxon's for Saxony, the Frankfurter's for Frankfurt, the Hanoverian's for Hanover; and that kind of patriotism is not yet merged in the greater feeling for United Germany. The Hanoverian has learned that he is a German, but he has not forgotten that he is a Hanoverian; often he is a Hanoverian first and a German second. He is proud, with good reason, of his city, of its prosperity, its industries, the purity of its local German, its healthiness, its

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amenity; and he sees its equals, Dresden and Stuttgart, the seats of monarchies of their own, with Ministers of their own, armies of their own, represented as half-independent unities in the Bundesrath or Federal Council, which is the highest deliberative body in the empire. The new generation of Hanoverians has forgotten King George V. driving down from Herrenhausen with four of the Weissgeborenen or Isabellen—the royal white-and-cream-coloured horses. But it does not forget, and cannot forget, that the taxes of Saxony and Wurtemberg go largely to the glorification of Dresden and Stuttgart; their own go right away out of Hanover to the glorification of Berlin. They are Germans governed by Germans it is true; but they are also Hanoverians governed by and for Prussians.

In the country, truer hearted, less allured by material prosperity—and for that matter without the material prosperity to allure it—the Guelph party still subsists. Here the grievance of centralisation, of being exploited to swell the grandeur of Berlin, is even better grounded and deeper rooted. The province of Hanover is mostly good land; the people are big, robust, intelligent, thrifty, and industrious. The Hanoverians do more with their land than the Prussians; consequently they are rated higher. The Hanoverian landowner pays

$3\frac{1}{8}$ d. a-week to the State insurance for each of his labourers, the Prussian only $1\frac{7}{8}$ d.; but the weakly Prussian labourer draws out the whole 5d. in illness or old age, while the Hanoverian labourer is still well and working. The taxes have doubled since 1866, and Hanover sees no more for them than before—except an enormous addition to the police. On the contrary, the administration—so at least say good Hanoverians—has got worse instead of better: they especially quote the woods and forests. The police, with all its elaborate system of checking every man's arrivals and departures, cannot trace a thief who has taken away a load of wood and not paid for it; but the police are always lurking about the restaurants to pounce on any peasant who has had a glass of schnapps too much and speaks disrespectfully of the Kaiser. Military service grinds harder than ever. There is no escape now for anybody; and the young peasants go to it with loathing and return after their three years of Prussian sergeant with deeper loathing yet. But they must hold themselves ready to fight the enemies of Prussia—possibly England, for example: they feel kindly towards England, but Prussia hates her, and Prussia gives the order. It so happens that the Low German the peasant speaks is as much English as it is German; of

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course the Prussian official does not talk it. From all of which it follows that when there is a case of theft or beggary, the peasants say, "It must have been a Prussian." And if you want to insult a peasant to blows you have only got to call him "Old Prussian"; he will come for you with a whip or a scythe.

Yet with all this rich manure of discontent the Guelph party does not thrive. It once counted twelve out of the fifteen deputies Hanover sends to the Reichstag; now it has only seven. At next year's election it may very likely be reduced to two; it may disappear altogether. What wonder? A party of protest can hardly hope to live: to declaim against the crime of 1866 is almost as vain now in Germany as to declaim against the crime of 1688 in England. What is to be the end of it? Can they bring back the Duke of Cumberland? He lends them so little support that he hardly seems to wish to come back, even were it possible. It is not certain that all the Guelphs would wish to bring him back at the cost of splitting up the empire; for they are still Germans, and that would deal a mortal wound at Germany. So, even in the country, seeing no end to it, the Hanoverians are coming out at the other end of discontent, and begin to call themselves Social Democrats.

Nevertheless, in odd corners Hanover is still full of pathetic loyalty. The nobility often compromise by sending their sons into the Saxon army — never the Prussian; but what other career offers except the army? Yet among the peasants you will find little daubs representing the Royal Family of Gmunden venerated like sacred relics. You will find a farmer's wife who knows the latest bulletin about the sick prince much better than do the society newspapers. The new postman — the old one was discharged for Guelph leanings — takes occasion to whisper, "I, too, am a good Hanoverian." I asked one old squire whether he really believed that there was any chance of the Guelphs coming back. "Baumfest," he stoutly cried; "sure as a tree." The thriving trader has become Prussian; even the noble, the peasant's natural leader, has in many cases deserted him; his pretender hardly exerts himself even to pretend. The slow-speaking, slow-thinking countryman remains true to his loyalty and his love. "Sure as a tree?" Alas! but one thing remains sure as a tree — the old man's constancy to his lost cause.

CHAPTER V

A COUNTRY GENTLEMAN

THE baron stood at his gate and looked out over his land. He wore a coarse brown holland jacket; there was dust on the hem of his trousers and on his big boots. Under the little straw hat the solid features and ruddy skin proclaimed him a countryman; the fine lines of his face, the unperturbed blue eyes, the imperious mouth under the yellow-grey moustache, warranted him a gentleman. Under the blazing sun, as he watched his people getting in his harvest, he stood up quiet and unmistakable, the cleanest of all God's creatures, a country gentleman.

Behind him was the house wherein he was born, and wherein his fathers had lived for five hundred years. Nothing like Hatfield or Longleat — a small, white, square-windowed house, with red tiles showing on the top and behind it a round tower for the single winding staircase. The house was the farther end of an oblong; on each side ran forward the outbuildings. On the left the

byre, the peasants' cottages, and the mill; on the right the stable, the coach-houses, and the barn; in front of all the gate. In the court rested a dozen hay-waggon; behind them, just in front of the house, was a bit of a lawn with a variegated maple-tree, a cinder-drive on each side; against the stable a vine, before the byre a line of standard roses, cobbles in front of the door.

It was about four o'clock, and we went in to dinner. The usual dinner-hour of the house is two, but it had been put back an hour for the convenience of the guests. There were the baroness and her niece, who had spent their morning in cotton clothes out and about and among the servants. So we sat down to dinner. We ate the typical German soup, trout tickled in their own waters by Fritz—who was waiting at the table in a groom's blue jacket with brass buttons, and who was unaffectedly complimented on his skill—and the typical German joint of meat, which appears to aim at the shape of a perfect cube. It was placed on the table at the baron's side; he carved it, and the slices were passed round on a plate; which done he poured out a glass of Rhine wine and drank the health of the guests. Then an ice-pudding, which somehow had got unfrozen. "Ach! mein Eis," sighed the baroness, for she had made it herself. Her niece, meanwhile, was

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for ever springing up to help the perspiring Fritz in getting the dishes round the table. Except for one small loaf of white bread, eaten sparingly, no single dish had ever been off the estate in its life. Dinner over, we had coffee, and lit cigars; and then, who could stay indoors? The baron let out the fox-terriers; we duly cuddled the baroness's ponies, and went out to be shown every single building and beast about the place, from the new chapel to the tame roe-calves.

The estate is not a large one, as we count estates in England. About 1300 acres I made it out to be, if my reduction of *morgen* to English measure is correct. Such as it is, the baron farms every rod of it himself. It was a strange hearing to English ears that he could not afford to have any of it down in pasture, except just enough for hay. Thirty-six cows live their whole lives tied by the head in the byre. Their fodder is straw; that and the very water are brought in to them there. They last three years of this life, after which they become beef. Meanwhile they average ten litres of milk a-day — say nine quarts; it was read off the dairy-sheet with great pride, but we should almost be ashamed of it in England. The proprietors of the neighbourhood have a milkery in the town four miles away; part is sold as milk — 2d. a litre retail, 1¼d. wholesale — part is made

into butter, and if there is skim-milk unsold it comes back for the pigs. But the stand-by was the crops. The rolling hills above us were checkered with the yellow stooks; across the stream men and women were mowing with heavy scythes, fitted with a basket between blade and handle to lay the corn evenly. It was a good harvest, though short in the straw, and it would be all in within ten days. Yes, it was possible to use the mowing-machine, but hand labour was cheaper. But I suspected also that the baron has a lurking objection to the mower as a new-fangled invention, to be identified with the Prussians — is he not a stout Hanoverian? — and with the consequent social democracy. But it was a good harvest — to God be praise and thanks! — and wheat had gone up from £6, 10s. to £8, 2s. per ton — the best price since that other root of all evil, the Russian commercial treaty of '93. Why, at that very moment appeared a Jewish corn-dealer to spend an hour in vainly imploring the highly well-born Ritter Gutsbesitzer to sell the already sold crops at £8, 5s.

Of course the corn is threshed on the estate, as soon as the autumn rains bring down the water-power to drive the machine. What is wanted in the house is ground afterwards in the mill. The beetroot must go off the estate to the sugar-factory

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a mile or two away, of whose company the baron is chairman. The fields were already cleared and ploughed for it — though, what with French and Austrian competition, over-production stimulated by bounty, and the new American tariff, beet-sugar is looking down just now as much as corn is looking up. The one is the leap of a moment, the other sinks steadily. Depression, to hear the agriculturist talk, is settling down as the permanent condition of agriculture the whole world over:

But in one point, at least, the British labourer of some Midland counties may envy Germany, as indeed he has a right to envy almost any living being on the earth. The three-and-twenty labourers on this estate live hard, but they live sufficiently for their wants, and they live securely. Here again everything comes from the baron. He keeps cottages in front of his house for them; he keeps a servant who does nothing but cook for them — coffee and black bread in the morning, soup — not always with meat in it — and black bread at midday, sour-milk or rice-milk and black bread in the evening. Their wives work in the fields with them this harvest-time: as we sat and discoursed of tariffs and freights we saw one strapping woman after another stride through the heat and stop to drink at the ice-cold well. These

people make little money, but they spend less; and each man has his potato-patch in the field behind the hill, wherein his woman-kind find time to work while he is on the farm. But always everything on the estate. The bailiff and his apprentice come in to tea every evening with the gentry; on Sundays they dine with them also. Even to be born, to be married, or to die, you need never move off the 1300 acres. For the baron has all the rights of a *burgomeister*; he is building a little chapel opposite the fowl-house, with a bell presented by the king-in-exile at Gmunden. And if you walk round the wood on the hill above the garden you will come upon a little green enclosure with a cross. There lies the baron's father in the heart of his land; and there, when his time comes, will the baron lie also.

It is a little kingdom sufficient to itself for all needs — always excepting the white bread, which comes in when the milk-cart returns in the morning. Yet what a simple kingdom! When we went in to supper — high tea it would be called in England — Fritz was waiting in a linen jacket. A glimpse into the kitchen, and there lay the plate on a sideboard: there was no pantry. There was but one gardener. All the servants took a hand at cleaning the vegetables, as Fritz took a hand

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in the stable; yet the housekeeper was called
"Mamzell," after the stately fashion of 1700.
There were no carpets in the bedrooms. Supper
was all cold, but for eggs, and next day the cold
beef reappeared at breakfast, and — supported by
pigeons from the courtyard — at dinner. And
after each meal, behind the priceless carvings of a
panel five hundred years old, Fräulein Ottilie
carefully locked up the leavings of white bread.

Besides the farm and the milky and the sugar-
factory this baron is head of the local savings-
bank, of the local council of the nobility, and a
member of the Reichstag to boot. Yet he asked
me whether it was true that we had no compulsory
military service in England, and I do not think he
had ever been out of Germany in his life. But
when we went out, all his people, down to the
very Russians imported for harvest-work, had a
respectful, very far from servile, salute for him;
he had a greeting and a word of instruction for
each. He has no child to follow him. But there
had come in with the milk-cart a curly-haired,
brown-legged nine-year-old, his nephew and heir.
The baron's firm mouth broke into a very tender
smile as he told us how once the boy had obeyed
him when he did not obey his own father. The
smile became wistful as he added that Kuno's
mother would not let him come to live there alto-

gether, and that she was quite right. And when somebody asked if the boy was going into the army, "No, no," cried the baroness; "thou makest thy examinations and thy service, and then thou comest to learn husbandry by Uncle Carl; yes, Kuno?" Kuno laughed, and looked up at Uncle Carl, and again Uncle Carl smiled wistfully.

We drove away in that most characteristic victoria, with the coronet on the harness and the very old hat on the coachman's head. We left the baron, with his second-class ticket to the sugar-factory, bowing with grave cordiality from the platform — feudal lord, patriarch, and peasant all in one, but especially a clean-blooded, clean-hearted, country gentleman.

CHAPTER VI

WHAT A GERMAN MAY NOT DO

THE light on German character and German government shed by the "Address-Book, Town and Business Handbook" of Hanover is certainly a dry one. But for the student with a few days to spare it can be confidently recommended as a source of instruction, and even, here and there, of amusement. Its priceless second part begins with the latitude and longitude of the four principal churches in the town, and winds up with the hours at which every doctor in the place may be found at home. Within these limits you can get all the conceivable statistics about Hanover, an outline of the municipal constitution, particulars of all the clubs, churches, poor-law boards, sanitary arrangements, educational arrangements, newspapers, and museums, besides instructions for railway travelling, with the tariff for tipping porters, practical hints as to posting a registered letter, directions for amusing yourself, remarks on what may and may not be done on Sunday, particulars as to the

price of coke, and the hours at which the street lamps are extinguished, and a list of the names and numbers of porters, with the place where each stands. In a word, it is a most masterly little monograph, and it goes without saying that it could exist nowhere but in Germany.

If you want to read it all you can get it for eight shillings, and with industry and concentration you will get one year's issue finished before the publication of the next. It is proposed, therefore, in this chapter to deal only with Part II., chapter viii., pages 83-104; "Polizei-Verwaltung und polizeiliche Einrichtungen," which, in our terser English, may be translated "Police." A brief abstract will give a clear and certainly an officially accurate idea of what the German may not do; after which, by simple subtraction, it is easy to discover what, if anything, he may do.

Sub-section I is devoted to "building-police." In Germany there seem to be many varieties of police. With us police is just police, and there you are; in Germany it may be building-police, street-police, five kinds of fire-police, charged respectively with preventing, announcing, and putting out fires, with the regulation of explosives, and with sweeping chimneys. Then there is business-police, press-police, and sub-sectional-police dealing with lodgings, particulars of resi-

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dence of inhabitants, passports, domestic servants, lost property, factories, clubs, public meetings, cruelty to animals, the keeping of large dogs, and skating. If a sense of multiform and strenuous activity can bring happiness, then in a future life the good will be German policemen. Return, though, to the building-police. For every building, erection round a building, addition to a building, or alteration of a building, without respect to its aim, position, or size, and for all other buildings, fixed or movable, which lie on public streets, ways, or places, or are visible therefrom, you must get preliminary permission from the police. Along with your application you must send a complete plan of the proposed work, and the name of the builder who is responsible for it. The police permission loses its validity if the work is not begun within a year. Pillars, supports, and so on must be tested with double the weight they are to bear, and the police must be satisfied of their successful trial. If anything is built contrary to regulations it has to be pulled down and built over again. When the building is finished in its raw state it must get a certificate from the police before it can begin to be decorated. The extent to which buildings may project into the street is rigidly prescribed. Steps must not protrude beyond the skirting, — that is, not more than 1-100th of

the street's width, and in no case more than twenty centimetres. Similarly, boot-scrapers. Steps leading down from the street may only begin thirty centimetres below the skirting; they must be protected with a lattice at least a metre high, with interstices of not more than twelve centimetres diameter. Twelve centimetres is under five inches, so that even a thin German runs little danger of slipping through. Window-sills less than 2·4 metres — say 7 feet — above the pavement may project no farther than the skirting; balconies are not allowed in streets less than ten metres wide, and must be at least three and a half metres above the pavement; water-pipes may only go fifteen centimetres into the street, and you cannot have a trap in the pavement without the written permission of the police. Finally, the police can forbid any building which in its opinion is a disfigurement to the street.

There are several hundred other regulations, but these are fair specimens. It will be seen that every single one has a definite and desirable public end in view, and tends towards personal safety, health, and correct appreciation of beauty on the part of the German. The police takes care that he does not knock his head; it takes care that he only sees buildings which it is good for him to see.

Passing to the street-police regulations, they

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open with the ordinance that the German who lives on the ground-floor shall have thoroughly cleansed his frontage of pavement by seven in the morning, from April 1 to September 30, and by eight from October 1 to March 31. If it gets dirty again in the course of the day the police can call upon him to clean it again. It might be that there is nobody living on the ground-floor, but the police is equal to that; then the person next above must clean it. In winter the inhabitant must keep it clear of ice and snow, and the way of doing this is prescribed; but to injure the pavement in the process is severely forbidden (*streng verboten*). You must put your dust and rubbish out on the pavement, but not till you hear the bell of the dust-cart; as soon as it is emptied you must take it in again. If anybody leaves any forbidden article on your piece of pavement you must clear it away. You must not hang beds or clothes out of window so that they can be seen from the street. You must not feed horses in streets where there is not room for two vehicles to pass, and in others only with the consent of the occupier opposite whose piece of pavement you are; you must watch the horse, and undo the traces while he is eating, and when he is done the occupier must clear up the spilt chaff. If you accidentally break a bottle or jug in the street you must carefully

gather up the pieces and take them away. If you stand on the pavement you must leave room for other people to pass. After this it is rather an anticlimax to learn that you must not discharge firearms in the street, nor shoot with crossbows and blow-pipes. If children make a noise in the street their parents can be punished, and "rambling about in droves" is forbidden after dark. Dogs that annoy people by barking are forbidden, especially after ten; if you take your dog out then the nearest policeman bears down on you and wakes the street with yells of "That dog — must — not bark!"

Again all very clean, and right, and proper, and leaving the German no loophole for naughtiness. The rest of the sub-sections may be passed over rapidly. Kitchen chimneys must be swept at least three times a-year, and, on the requisition of the police, as often as six times. In Hanover the chimney-sweep is a public official, and his fee is regulated by the police law. If you move into the district, you must produce your police permission to come from your last abode; if you move out, you must produce your tax-receipt, and announce your future abode; if you move inside the district, you must announce to the police that you leave one dwelling and take up another. Then follow regulations telling you on what occasions

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you may or may not dismiss a servant, and what breakages you can make her pay for. The chapter on waitresses is of special interest. Nobody may be a waitress without giving evidence of her name, age, birthplace, and freedom from crime and immorality during three years. Her employer must keep all this written down in a book, and produce it when the police ask for it. She must not live with her employer, nor in the same house; she must leave the place at 10 P.M. and not re-enter it till 7 next morning. Waitresses must not sit or stand about with customers. They are forbidden to wear fancy costumes, and they may only wear national costumes upon proving to the satisfaction of the police that they really belong to the nationality in question. Otherwise their dress must not be open at the neck, and must come down at least to the ankle.

The police regulations about public meetings and the press are a little dull after this, and are better known in England. You must not hold a public meeting without giving twenty-four hours' clear notice to the police, and when you print anything you must dash off at once with a copy for the approval of the police. Finally, bulldogs and all larger dogs, as short or long-haired St. Bernards, must be muzzled and led by a leash not more than 16 inches long, and that not on the pavement but

in the street. And in winter you may skate only between the red flags, and unless the green flag is up you may not skate at all.

When I had read all this I was taken with a fierce longing to go out and commit a crime. Few of the above cost more than 9s. ; some only 3s., some only 1s. I wanted to do something untidy, to spoil something, to block the way, to break a bottle and only pick the pieces up carelessly, to hold an open-air meeting, to fire a revolver at a policeman, to wear a skirt above the ankle — anything, so long as it was a crime. In the course of twenty minutes' walk in a public pleasure place I counted fifty boards all forbidding something or other ; and then I deliberately and openly walked across the grass. I was not arrested ! That particular board was momentarily without its attendant policeman. The truth is that all the regulations cannot be always enforced — never can be till all the inhabitants are policemen but one.

But would you like to be a German ?

CHAPTER VII

WILLIAM II.¹

WILLIAM II. has now been on the throne of Germany for thirteen years. During the greater part of this time his rule has been in practice, if not in theory, quite despotic. He is now forty-one years old — that is, in the high prime of life, though the Germans, by contrast with his grandfather, often speak of him as if he were a mere boy. His abilities are unquestioned; his sincerity and honesty of intention, to my mind, beyond suspicion. His worst enemy could not accuse him of not knowing his own mind. His energy wellnigh amounts to a wonder of nature. His hand is in every detail of government: he can ride in icy rain all day at the head of his cavalry, transact business in the afternoon, attend a banquet and stagger Europe with a drink-speech, and then go off to sleep in his special train, and do the same thing next day and the next and the next. There are all sorts of stories about mysterious maladies, but whatever may or may not be affecting him has certainly not curtailed his

¹ *Vide* Editor's note, at the end of this chapter.

powers of work. With all his high qualities, his quickness, insight, sincerity, self-confidence, resolution, energy, he has in thirteen years accomplished — nothing : absolutely nothing.

Absolutely nothing to show for himself by the side of the Great Elector, of Frederic the Great, of Friedrich Wilhelm III., of William I. Even his father had taken a man's share in the making of Germany; the son has made nothing. And not only that, but throughout his whole empire — ruled, remember, almost literally in accordance with his personal wishes in every smallest particular — broods sullen discontent and irritation. I do not mean that every German is discontented, nor have I any instrument to gauge exactly how discontented Germans are; but that, from one cause or another, there does exist a vast deal of dissatisfaction with the present government of the German empire is quite beyond dispute. You may divide it into two main branches, each with almost numberless subdivisions. There are the discontents outstanding from the last generation, when nationality formed the basis of insurrections and wars — the national, Particularist sentiment of Bavaria and Saxony, of Hanover and Hesse and Frankfurt, of the Alsatians and the Poles. And there are the new growing discontents which spring up out of economic ground — the new generation's kind of dissatis-

faction revealing itself in anti-Semitism, in Agrarianism, and Socialism.

The first kind of disaffection might be exaggerated; the wonderful thing is that it subsists at all. But to prove that it subsists you may have only to get a Bavarian or a Saxon by himself and talk to him for a few minutes. Sometimes he will be more anti-Prussian, sometimes less; but he will very seldom profess not to know that there is a very bitter feeling against the Prussianisation of both States. How far Prussianisation has gone — say, in Bavaria — hardly matters; the essential point is, that, real or fanciful, it is bitterly resented. The suggestion, for example, of the introduction of the black trousers of the Prussian soldier into the Bavarian army, instead of the traditional bright blue, raised a howl of indignation. The volume of the howl was not very great, but so far as it went it was shrill. Its leader was a Dr. Sigl, editor of a newspaper very influential among the Bavarian peasants, member of the Reichstag, and popularly known as the "Prussian-gobbler." He is a vulgar agitator, say his enemies, and perhaps he is. But the fact that the least attempt to assimilate Bavaria to Prussia in the least particular sets Dr. Sigl off, screaming indignation, and winning by-elections into the bargain, is far from insignificant.

In the semi-independent kingdoms Particularism is kept alive by the mere fact of semi-independence; in Hanover, Alsace-Lorraine, and the Polish provinces it is fostered by the exact opposite. The two kinds of anti-Prussianism act and react. States with their own government point to Hanover and Posen, and resolve not to merge into provinces; provinces point to Saxony and Wurtemberg, and aspire to their status of modified self-government. Of these last malcontents, Hanover, of which I spoke more in detail, is the weakest, and therefore the more instructive. The German Right party, the party of protest against 1866, which exists in Hanover, in Hesse-Cassel, in Frankfurt — all violently subjected to Prussia in that year — is growing weaker, as a party based on protest against an abstract wrong inevitably must. But Poland and Alsace-Lorraine, where protest can base itself on a distinct difference of race, still send compact parties of their own to the Reichstag, and show every disposition to go on sending them.

Particularism, in short, is still, after a generation of nominal unity, decidedly alive in Germany; but when you come to ask how much alive, the case is altered. Except in case of any violent attempt at Prussianisation of the federal units, at violent dragooning of the dissatisfied provinces, there is no immediate serious danger to the Kaiser

from Particularism. In case of an aggressive war with a powerful neighbour the States might give trouble; they might even refuse their co-operation in an extreme case: but that, I fancy, is the beginning and end of any grave danger from Particularism. In a defensive war, for example, Bavaria and Saxony may be expected to co-operate with Prussia as loyally and as effectively as they did in 1870.

Socialism in Germany is unquestionably strong: it would be wonderful if it were not so. In a country where the State already does so much for the regulation of private life it would be wonderful if any man who felt himself at a disadvantage in any way did not ask the State to do still more. The whole system of German government is a nursery-garden of Socialism. It is so with the Agrarian Conservatives: depressed agriculture is apt everywhere to bang at Government doors for relief, but in Germany it goes so far as to ask the State to shut out foreign corn for half the year, or to fix the price of bread. But Agrarianism is important only as depriving the Kaiser of his natural supporters among extreme Conservatives: Socialism is both stronger and more minatory. It is the only party, except the Catholic, with an energetic propaganda and a tight organisation. It is the only party which knows its own mind, and is not

afraid; and so quite naturally it tends to rally to itself every element of opposition in the whole country. A man gets tired of the futile protests of Hanover or Alsace, of the factious squabbles of the Individualist Radicals, of the empty jeremiads of the Agrarians. He sees the Socialists standing shoulder to shoulder, knowing what they want and how to go to work to get it; he votes Socialist. Socialism, in short, is aggregating to itself, not merely its natural raw material—the wage-earner who wants his wages to go further—but every kind of dudgeon that votes against the Government. Even postmen and policemen vote Socialist; and in Germany, you must remember, a postman or a policeman is disposed to consider himself a member of the Government. Social Democracy has already forty-eight voices out of 397 in the Reichstag, and these are the only choir which always sings in tune. After next year's election it will have seventy. It is already the universal Adullam; it will shortly be the official Opposition.

And what does it want? Of course that question is a disputed one, and all the German opinions I have heard would take reams of paper for a mere summary. But compendiously I do not think the German Socialist, even in his heart, desires revolution. He may be a trained soldier, but he has no

arms nor military organisation nor generals, and a week of civil war against the active army — which would follow its officers — would leave Socialism a very foolish figure in Germany. Its enemies say that the leaders want money, and the followers don't know what they want: and Socialist Democrats themselves say that they are quite satisfied, not with what they have got, but with what they are getting. Their present emphasis is less on the Socialist than on the Democratic part of their creed. They are struggling for very much what trade unionists in England are working for — the removal of all disabilities on industrial combination and political agitation, and therewith the raising of the standard of living in the working class. Involved in this is a resolute opposition to absolutism and militarism in every form. And Socialists say they are doing very well. They can neither command nor defeat any policy, but, with the fortuitous support of other fractions, they can often secure small concessions and obstruct small encroachments of the Government. Take, for example, Dr. Miguel's "Vereinsgesetz," lately thrown out by the Prussian House of Commons. It was an attempt to set back the course of nature by reviving old shackles on the federation of trade unions. It was thrown out — not by Socialists: they make no figure in the Prussian Landtag — mainly by the National Liberals.

But the Socialists get the credit of the victory. It was a victory for their policy; whereas nobody knows what the National Liberal policy is from one Saturday to another. With this sort of occasional triumph the Socialists profess to be well satisfied for the present.

But whatever they intend or do not intend, they are hardly working hand-in-hand with the Kaiser. William II. set out to allay the complaints of his people on his own better-than-Bismarckian principles. He has failed utterly. After some years of it Socialism is perhaps seven times as strong as it then was, while the classes of society which would back the Kaiser against it are perhaps seven times as weak. That, up to now, is the net result of the Kaiser's system at home.¹

¹ I may here state, on the authority and by the desire of one who had the best means of knowing, that George Steevens's judgment and knowledge had ripened so far (and time has proved conclusively that the Kaiser's judgment has also progressed with events) that, though I leave the words as he wrote them then, the fact is that, at the last, by few men was the Kaiser held in greater esteem than by George Steevens. — ED.

CHAPTER VIII

THE GERMAN IN THE FARMYARD

WHEN I went to Germany I was prepared to find endless instances of intelligent energy which I might detail for the envy and imitation of our depressed agriculturist at home. I had a vague idea that from progressive Germany we imported everything, from fat beasts to the stuff that beasts are fattened on. But now I have lived and loafed about several agricultural parts of Germany, and conversed with landowners, farmers, and labourers; and the record is still unbroken that in every part of the world the agriculturist wears exactly the same face of persecuted merit, bemoans exactly the same grievances, sighs for exactly the same consolations, and in every several country believes himself to be the one pre-eminent sufferer in the whole world.

The bitterest cry in Germany comes from the districts east of the Elbe, Prussia proper, Prussian Poland, and Silesia. My experience has lain wholly to the west of the Elbe, so that it is presumably a favourable one. Judging from the contempt ex-

pressed by the farmers of Hanover for the farmers of other parts, I infer that they fear no comparison, which makes the experience look more favourable still. And in all districts, on all soils, under all systems of tenure, they are depressed and complain.

It is here as everywhere. Low prices are the grievance; over-production is the principal cause; protection is the popular cure. On the rolling ridges of corn and beetroot they cry out against the Russo-German Commercial Treaty of 1893, and especially against the sugar-bounty system. The first swamped them with Russian corn; the second has raised up murderous competition. It is true that this year shows a rise in corn prices, and a fairly good harvest; although the dry spring has docked the value of the straw. But the rise is not likely to be a permanent one, and the farmer clamours for a high duty on corn. Fanatics from Prussia even want the State to fix a price—naturally a high one; the State, with its eye on the consumer, naturally refuses. The more level-headed see that the evil can be stayed neither by the one cure-all nor by the other. The fact that where duties have gone down 10 marks prices have fallen 100 is evidence of that. The German corn-grower is suffering along with his fellows in every country round the globe.

In the case of sugar there is not even the con-

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solution that the consumer gets his sugar cheap. The bounty on export is taken out in taxes at home; consequently German sugar which the English housekeeper buys at $1\frac{1}{2}$ d. a-pound costs the German's wife 3d. For the very exporter the present outlook is bleak and comfortless. Austria has come in to compete with a bounty of $\frac{1}{2}$ d. per hundredweight more than his; Holland pays 4d. more, Belgium 5d. more, France 6d. more. Overproduction has again led to disaster. And now, for the final blow, comes the new American tariff. In 1896 Germany exported £2,200,049 worth of sugar to the United States. Now the new tariff handicaps the German sugar, which receives the bounty on the finished product; the French, which receives it as beetroot, comes off scot free. "It was expressly aimed at Germany," growls the German beet-grower. And as prices go hopelessly down taxes and wages go remorselessly up.

Things are not so bad in the grazing districts. On the wide flat pastures that flank the lower Elbe and the North Sea coast you hear tones less querulous. Stock does not fetch what it did by a long way; but a fat beast will still sell for £20, and it is not so impossible to fatten him. It is a naked land; the miles and miles of flat grass country are broken only by rare plantations, which embosom farmhouses, and by tall dikes, which are the ram-

parts of the land. But for the thick trees the bitter wind would blow the houses to pieces; but for the dikes the pastures would lie year in and year out under salt water. But in the summer the pasture lies open to the sun, and wonderful pasture it is. Thick, fine, and tender, and half made of clover, as the heavy soil holds every drop of water: look at it, and you long to have been born a beast. Here is the best-bred stock in Germany. Hanover and Celle are both notable centres of horse-breeding, and you may marvel all day to see the long-barrelled, well-coupled, square-quartered, blood-like beasts in the very tradesmen's carts. But in this corner of Germany you stumble upon thoroughbreds round every corner — thoroughbreds, too, bred not for strength and speed so much as for beauty. The cattle are of Germany's best, also, with a good deal of imported Shorthorn blood, as well as Ayrshire and Galloway; for this the farmers have to thank the late Count Bremer, an untiring experimenter and improver. Seeing how he has left his mark on the stock of a wide district, you understand what a public blessing a good landlord can be. For beef, Hamburg provides an inexhaustible market and distributing centre. The sheep have been crossed with English blood; the large white pigs are equal to Yorkshire's best; the very ducks are often imported Aylesburys.

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Only on one count, so far as I can see, has the British farmer to learn from these people: in most he is their superior. Their beasts are well bred and enjoy magnificent pasture, but otherwise they are poorly fed. The farmer's horses do not often see much oats in their chopped straw. There has been such a thing heard of as a 30-quart cow, but twelve to fourteen quarts is a very high figure for a cow in full milk—and not a butter-cow at that. The German farmer regards a Shorthorn as we regard a Jersey: a good butter-cow, he says, but give him a heavy milker. What he calls a heavy milker is a relative of the Dutch cow we know in England—the sort that gives six per cent of added water without the aid of the pump. As for dairies, I saw one on a day in what was by way of being a show farm. Every girl fit to call a dairymaid knows that a dairy should be spotless, and should contain nothing but milk and cream and butter. Here the shelves were not only wooden, but they were decorated with paper frillings like a cutler's collar; and the dust hinted at the time since they last were washed. Moreover, the home-brewed beer, strong cheese, preserved hams, and bacon, lived in the dairy with milk. The butter, throughout all Germany, resents this treatment; it flabbily declines to taste of cream. It is true this farmer had the ingenious

idea to connect his churn with his chaff-cutter, and get it turned by a horse; but the churn itself was an old box, and not over clean. You seldom see a mowing-machine; they say the land is too uneven for it, and they cling to the sickle of their fathers. Fowls are mostly Leghorns and Plymouth Rocks, but also largely an undersized, profitless bantam kind of thing; and not being able to get more than a $\frac{1}{2}$ d. a-piece for eggs, the farmer eats them himself. And as for flowers, fruit, and vegetables — well, I have seen the Horticultural Exhibition at Hamburg, and I may fairly presume that this does Germany justice. If I wished to boast, I should say I could go out into my own garden and cut and dig up a better exhibition before breakfast; as I do not, I will merely say I have seen half-a-dozen village shows in England where exhibits that took a prize at Hamburg would not have been allowed inside the door.

And now the one point wherein the German puts the Englishman to utter shame. You have guessed it, no doubt; there is only one point left. Economy. Economy in its active and its passive aspects — hard work and frugality, the German farmer excels in both. One farmer I visited is seventy-nine years old, and has been on his farm forty-three years. He looks like a caricature of a

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peasant — a long pointed nose, a slit for a mouth, white wisps of beard from one ear under the chin to the other, white wisps of hair curling from one side of the head to the collar on the other. But the old man went to bed at half-past nine last night and was up at half-past three this morning. His wife, his two sons, and three daughters each put in their eleven or twelve hours' work a-day on the farm.

The other four labourers take their board and lodging on the farm; this is the general German system, and it is plainly an economical one. It must always be cheaper to feed six together than six apart. Rice-milk and black bread in the morning, soup of smoked beef or coarse two-year-old pork and vegetables at midday, bread-and-butter and a glass of schnapps in the field for tea, fried dumpling, onions, and potatoes in the evening. Thereto as much home-brewed beer as they can drink — considering that it gives the general impression of weak paste turned sour, they can drink a surprising deal of it. It is a hard life, and the wages are very small — £22 a-year at the best, £5 at the worst. But what the labourer makes is almost all clear savings, for his very washing is done in the farmhouse. These men are hired for the half-year, as in Scotland. And though for the married day-labourer 10s. 6d. a-week in summer

and 8s. 4d. in winter is a fair average, he generally gets his cottage free, and a very fine, well-built, roomy cottage it is. After all, 8s. 4d. with a cottage in Germany is a great deal more than 10s. with rent to pay in England.

CHAPTER IX

A GERMAN HOLIDAY

THE deck of the fast steamer Cobra, plying between Hamburg and the popular seaside resorts of Heligoland, Sylt, Norderney, and Borkum, beggared disgust. She had started with her cargo of holiday-makers at eight in the morning. I went on board from Cuxhaven at half-past twelve. But already the deck was a rolling pavement of beer-bottles. It was raining, and the slippery planking ran beer and water; in the beer and water stewed the stale ends of cigars. Waiters rushed up and down with more beer; the Germans emptied the bottles and then added them to the deck. The ship recalled the morrow of a hoggish debauch; really it was only the natural and normal beginning of the German's holiday. Observe the fat travelling bags — all of a handy size for the rack: you pay extra for the van — with one side embroidered over in wool-work, and the legend "Pleasant journey" patterned in beads in the middle.

You would have expected the company to be a herd of coarse rowdies, by the side of whom a Sunday shipload of Margate trippers would be refined and intellectual. But not at all. These were all persons of the highest respectability — the staid and prosperous middle classes, who were making a trip which none but the relatively affluent could afford. The men might indeed be bloated with much good living, little exercise, and endless beer; yet they held themselves upright like old soldiers, now self-respecting men of business; their large foreheads suggested men of education and intellectual power. The women — and herein lay the difference from an English crowd of the upper middle class — were infinitely less refined than the men. Fat, sitting with their knees wide apart, with large coarse features, dowdy, baggy travelling dresses, handbags slung round their middles in front, mackintoshes hitched to their waists behind, they radiated an uncomfortable suggestion of a Kaffir kraal. You saw what goal the pink and blue and flaxen bride was travelling to.

From the whole boat swelled a roar of loud-voiced conversation, and the subject was always the same. Time-table and guide-book — nothing else. The German has a passionate love of details, especially of details with a flavour of official authority about them. They talked on by the hour

about the best connection from Ober-Puppenheim to Hamburg, where you stopped for four minutes — or was it six? loud dispute — to get a glass of beer; what was the exact tariff for the porter who carried your baggage on board the boat; how much they charged for breakfast at the third-best hotel in Norderney; the exact date and dimensions of the new post-office at Heligoland. I should have been appalled at their learning, but that I had the same time-table and guide-book myself. Yet they babbled on, reeling off strings of facts which each man knew to come word for word out of the guide-book, which yet each received — except when inaccurately remembered — as if he were absorbing a new theory of life from a new Socrates. It all showed wonderful memory, wonderful grasp of particulars, wonderful gravity — and wonderful childishness. Such might be the debates of a Parliament of babies.

When the boat began to dance and the waves to splash on board, the Parliament became hilarious. Between each drenching their faces relapsed into statesmanlike preoccupation; as the spray flew up they screamed like children. After a little of that many retired to the side of the ship, and were gravely sea-sick. And after a little of that came the time to land. On the landing ensued a ceremony which seems traditional in German watering-

places — is it not mentioned in the sacred guide-books? The visitors were massed on the beach, leaving a clear pathway for the new-comers to pass between them. As each bedraggled, pale passenger set foot on land the crowd proceeded to jeer at him. Especially the women came in for yells of derision: "Hallo, mother-in-law, chemist's shop to the left," cried the wits. Loudest of all was the reception of a couple with the unmistakable mark of honeymooners. You would never have believed that behaviour so cubbish and unmannerly could exist in civilisation — except that it should be taken in such complete good part. Men stopped in the middle of the gangway to answer chaff with chaff. The bridegroom took off his hat and bowed as if he was a conquering hero; the very bride only laughed. It was again the unconstrained badinage of the nursery.

And now we are at the German seaside: what do we do there? How do we amuse ourselves? First and most important, with beer and the band. Germany cannot do without either, and the comfort is that you can take both together. After beer and the band — the baths. The German never talks of the seaside; he calls it a sea-bath. He takes his sea-bath with the solemnity with which he takes his time-table and his beer. The morning is the time, and the style of bathing is

the common female, or bob-and-duck, style. Not that the German cannot swim: there is a swimming bath in every little town that has a river to put it in, and the young men are as useful in the water as they are in the gymnasium. But at the sea-bath the bob-and-duck is the way to bathe, and the German does things in the way. The joy of the Englishman, still more of the American, is to do something out of the way; the German finds his warmest glow in finding out the regulation way, and triumphantly walking in it. So he takes his bath-ticket and his machine, attires his portly form in an ordinary bathing costume, goes quivering, jelly-like, into the surf, bows himself and carries water to his face, and then awaits the wave. Three waves is the regulation dose for the first day; when three have wetted him he quivers back to his machine: he has taken his bath. The sexes do not bathe together; as you walk — flanked by notice-boards directing you to places ten yards away, or forbidding you to damage the beach — you come to a notice-board whose genial peremptoriness is thoroughly German. "For the honoured gentleman-public," it runs: "thus far and no farther." There you may stand and see fisherwomen, attired in what appear white night-gowns, push the machine down to the sea. Therefrom emerges the German's wife: her dress,

figure, and method of bathing is a disappointingly exact copy of her husband's.

The German has bathed; he glows with satisfaction. He describes the process to everybody he meets; he never saw his friend before, and his friend has just done exactly the same thing; yet each repeats his exploits with frank self-gratulation. Then dinner — midday eat, they most appropriately call it — say soup; lobster eaten with a knife; roast veal in a curiously square, lumpy joint with viscous spiced gravy over it; raw herring and kidney beans cooked with nutmeg; roast fowl with salad and stewed peaches; pudding; cheese; dessert; coffee; the whole prefaced by beer, accompanied by Rhine-wine and seltzer, with an epilogue of beer at the end. That is a fair sample of the German midday eat; and the wonderful thing is that he takes it, if he can afford it, every day, work-days and holidays alike. Of course he is comatose after it, and must sleep for a couple of hours. Business takes its siesta from twelve to three in Germany as completely as it does in Turkey. But you must remember that the German was at work at eight, and will not knock off till six or seven.

Remember that he has had his coffee and roll (early-piece), and his sandwich and glass of beer (second early-piece) before he comes to midday-

eat. After that comes coffee and a roll, evening-eat — say steak and onions, cold beef, sausage and raw ham, stewed fruit and oddments—and then a little sandwich to wind up with before going to bed. In all seven meals, of which, however, only one quite disabling.

For the interstices between meals, beer and the band. At Norderney and Heligoland there are theatres; at simpler Borkum you sing in chorus with the band. The more athletic young men play with their spades and pails. But one great pastime we must not forget — sending picture post-cards to one's friends. The picture post-card is one of the vital elements in German life; the most highly cultivated do not disdain to play with them. On one side they are wholly taken up with views, with the simple inscription: "Greeting from ——" wherever it may be. On the other side you have only to write the address. As the object of the German's travels is not so much enjoying himself in a place as enjoying saying he has been there — adding it to his repertory — the picture post-card is just the sort of combined index and guarantee of good faith that he wants. The picture may be a view of a place or of an event. They sell them on excursion steamers, in music-halls, dancing-saloons, everywhere — each with its own inscription: "Greeting

from *La Marguerite*"; "Greeting from the Tivoli"; "Greeting from the largest crane in the world at Hamburg," greeting from any conceivable place a German could ever visit. If you prefer humour, you can get pictures of a row of people being sea-sick over a ship's side. At the manœuvres soldiers by the hundred bought half-penny cards with little pictures of soldiers manœuvring on them to send to friends. If you are artistic you can get one with the *Sistine Madonna*; if frivolous, one with the *Sisters Barrison*. High-toned or low, the whole nation plays with the picture post-card as one German. It is the exact summary of the German holiday.

CHAPTER X

POOR LITTLE HELIGOLAND

HELIGOLAND is an absurd little triangle of red rock sticking up out of the North Sea. Its population is put down as something over 2000; and an active man can walk round it, cutting off a corner here and there, in twenty minutes. Its staple industry is letting lodgings to Germans, varied by fishing in the off season. Its staple export, up to the time it became part of the German empire, was postage stamps.

Why the Kaiser ever cast the eye of desire upon it, and exchanged for it the German claim upon vast territories in Eastern Africa, the Germans themselves do not profess to know. As a taxable entity Heligoland is securely contemptible. Its fisheries have fallen off; nothing grows on it but potatoes and a few sheep; there is said to be one horse on it, though he is not exhibited to strangers, and the cows are imported for the tourist season. Strategically it seems equally insignificant. It lies opposite the mouths of the Elbe and Weser; but it has no harbour, hardly a roadstead,

and nothing with even a remote resemblance to a dock or a wharf. It is the kind of island which the stronger Power can do without, and which is no help to the weaker. To these elements of uselessness it adds the disadvantage that it is slowly, but steadily, falling away into the sea.

Why did the Kaiser desire it? Perhaps the explanation is to be found in the historical maps of Germany, as appointed to be used in schools. There you will see, each marked in a separate colour, the various territories added to the original Mark of Brandenburg by succeeding sovereigns of Prussia. From Albert the Bear, down through the Great Elector and the Great Frederic, the tale of expansion goes on till it comes down to Alsace and Lorraine. And then the list of enlargers of the empire closes with the still, small inscription —

1890 : WILHELM II., HELIGOLAND.

And there, I fancy, you have it.

He wanted something to play with, something of his very own to add to the empire, whereupon he might leave his indelible mark; and played with it in the seven years of its Germanisation he assuredly has. The first word you meet when you step ashore in Heligoland is the familiar "Forbidden." It is forbidden to make a mess on the beach on pain of punishment by the police.

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Under the notice stands the largest German policeman my eyes ever saw, spiked helmet on head, and in his belt, not only the universal sword, but also a huge revolver. A little farther on you come to a flat stone let into the ground, with the inscription: "Wilhelm II., August 10, 1890." That marks the spot where the Kaiser stood when he took possession of the island. Even poor little Heligoland cannot escape the German passion for memorials.

Then you begin to pass through the streets of the queer little place. Heligoland is a toy place all over and all through. It looks like a toy island from the first moment the grey blotch bobs up over the steamer's bow; but when you pass through the narrow streets, with the wooden painted houses, the suggestion of a German toy is irresistible. There is no carriage traffic, and so the main streets are 10 feet wide and the side streets 6 feet. The many-coloured houses have just the pointed roofs and the regular square windows that we all remember on the lids of our boxes of bricks; they are mostly two-storeyed, yet so low that it looks as if one good kick would send all Heligoland down flat. The names are a queer jumble of English and German. The Empress of India Hotel stands side by side by the Deutscher Reichs Adler, and Kaiser Strasse is parallel with Victoria Strasse. But, of course, the names

of the streets have been translated into German letters, though, to be sure, O'Brien Strasse still remains in its glory. And in the middle of the Kaiser Strasse stands the new post-office. The Kaiser's Government, of course, suppressed the stamps which were one of Heligoland's main sources of income, and assimilated the postage to the rest of the empire. But the old post-office was plainly not imposing enough for a department of the sacred Government. So they have built a new one of glazed bricks in the style of the Victoria Station subway — the most pretentious edifice on the island. And on it, in letters of gold, stands the inscription, "Built under William II."

But the first-fruits of that beneficent rule consist in the fortifications. Nothing grows in Heligoland except potatoes did I say? What a magnificent crop of notice-boards, long in the straw, heavy in the ear, embowers the fortifications! With what sternness is the Heligolander forbidden to approach the fortifications, referred to section so-many-hundred-and-so-many of the "Strafgesetzbuch," and threatened with the penalties of the Act dealing with the betrayal of military secrets! "Strafgesetzbuch" means, literally, punishment-law-book — that is to say, criminal law. Criminal law is a necessity of all civilised States — and yet there is something about the conception of the "punish-

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ment-law-book" quite German. You picture the German buying the work in a book-shop, and reading it up to find what things it is naughty to do and how hard he will be smacked for each naughtiness respectively. The Heligolander would seem to be beset by few temptations; but with the Germans came the new crime of betraying military secrets. Before, there were no military secrets to betray. Now, in the ample space devoted to official notices, you may read directions how the Heligolander is to avoid this crime. He must not sketch or photograph forts or guns; he must not take notes of their bearings; he must keep off the grass near them, and in general he must not look at them too often or too long. And he must remind all strangers politely — no naughty rudeness! — that they must do likewise.

You may some of you remember the First Recruit. He was the first baby born after the cession of the island, and when his time comes he will have to serve in the army or navy. You may see the poor little wretch's pinched face — he is twelve years old now — in almost every shop window in Heligoland. He has been photographed in a busby and sabre, with a toy horse at his feet, from which I infer that the idea is to make a hussar of him. Possibly Heligoland's only horse has been imported to familiarise him betimes with the fact that such

a quadruped exists. Now, shortly after the First Recruit was born the Kaiser and Kaiserin visited the island in state ; and of the scandalous behaviour of the First Recruit on this occasion I speak on the testimony of an eyewitness. When the Kaiserin landed there met her six maidens of Heligoland bearing a bouquet of flowers. Behind them was the First Recruit in the arms of his mother ; the Kaiserin approached him and made to pat his cheek. The First Recruit made one wild clutch at the bouquet and tore the middle out of it. Next came the Kaiser, and, undeterred, made also to pat his cheek. Then the First Recruit once more raised an impious hand and smote his sovereign across the face, and then turned right round and showed his back and hid his face and refused to be comforted. From this it may be inferred that the First Recruit is of the old Heligoland party, which objects to German rule — the new Heligoland party not being yet in existence.

The Heligolanders are a square-built race, akin in dress and looks to our East Coast fishermen, with faces seared brick-red by the salt wind. They say little, but they do not like the change. They do not like the police, they do not like the regulations. They do not like the guts of their island torn out to make fortifications which they must not walk over. They do not like a lump of their island to

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fall into the sea when the heavy guns are fired : there is not much of the island, and all there is they want. They do not like the prospect of sending their sons away for three years to serve a sovereign whose quarrels are not theirs ; and especially they do not like the broad space of cliff papered with instructions what they are to do and what they are not to do. One, I noticed, had reference to an electric launch. Somebody appeared to have said that it was not safe, and its German owner complained to the magistrate, who issued a notice, saying that if anybody did that again he would be punished under rule so-many-thousand-and-so-many. Of course it was wrong of the boatman to libel the electric launch, but it was probably sincerely done, and very human. Only the iron heel is down on Heligoland, and human nature must be squeezed out.

The magistrate issues his notice from some town in Schleswig-Holstein. Heligoland stands all by itself in the sea ; its people have their own little history and traditions and ways, their own German-Danish-Dutch-English speech. But they are part of the German empire now, and in the German empire there is only room for the one pattern. Poor little Heligoland, melting away into the German Ocean !

CHAPTER XI

AT THE KAISER MANŒUVRES

THE gentlemen of the press assembled in the railway station of Frankfurt at half-past five every morning ; there they met the officer of the great general staff appointed to give them information concerning the manœuvres.

To each he distributed an account of the forces engaged, a summary of the preceding day's operations, a map showing the position of the troops, and a sketch of the idea governing the operations of the day. Each journalist had his pass, enabling him to wander as he liked over the whole ground : when he had got his information from the Herr Major he could act upon it as he deemed best. The arrangement gave him plenty of discretion. The country covered by the manœuvres was fifty miles by twenty-five, the force engaged four Army Corps — two Prussian, two Bavarian — of three divisions apiece, with three independent Cavalry divisions. Say roughly, a country the size of Wiltshire, and a force equal to the British army in

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Britain. Substitute ball-cartridges for blank, and the two armies were operating exactly under the conditions of war.

The generals commanding knew roughly the strength of the enemy: where he was and what he was doing each had to find out for himself—that was the exercise of the first day. It had been raining since midnight. At half-past six, as I climbed slowly up the high ground north-east of Frankfurt, the roads were already like rice-pudding; the ploughed fields clung to boots and horse shoes till they felt like the leaden soles of the diver; the pastures were like a soaked sponge, and the heavens were opened like a sieve. The beautiful blue-marked maps were pulp in my pocket before I saw the first soldier. Then, trotting along the streaming road, I came up with a string of waggons—the baggage of the advance-guard. The infantry escort had covers over their helmets; they were squeezing water out of their Wellington boots by the bucket; they had been on the road since three in the morning; yet they were lighting cigars with cheerfulness, and grinned as they asked me if I had seen anything of the Bavarians.

As the broad-faced peasant asked the question came the muffled thud of guns away on the right. I rode up a long hill of stubble, and looked out

over a grey half country of hill and valley, wood, and mud, and water, to see what it was. Miles away on the left a wisp of smoke was just melting into the drizzle; miles away in front came a couple of sparks, washed out again in an instant, and then, a minute after, a couple of thuds. That was the beginning. That was the horse artillery attached to the reconnoitring cavalry; they had found the enemy, and were trying a shot or two to tempt him to reply and show his hand. I descried, in the direction of the fire, a church steeple, apparently just being washed off the sky-line of a bare hill, and rode towards it. When I got there I found infantry knapsacks and cooking-pans, overcoats and water-bottles, rifles and cartridge-pouches. These boys of twenty had been scrunching through slush and gravel since half-past one in the morning. It was now ten; but bent a little forward under the weight on their backs, with tight belts, and pale faces, and lips gripped together, they scrunched heavily on.

However, the operations for the day were already almost over. Presently I came to the leading battalions of the Prussian force: they had piled arms on either side of a road which ran through a wood; they had got their packs off, and were soaking placidly on the ground. Generals and adjutants and umpires, in long mauve-

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grey overcoats, splashed up and down, saluting rigidly. Just in front the cavalry were feeling for the enemy. At each turn in the road, at each break in the trees, you came on a little clump of a dozen or half-dozen uhlans. They would be moving along at a wary walk. Then the clump would split up. One man disappeared down a grass ridge through the wood, another rode cautiously to a cottage, stole round it silently, and brushed the drops from his helmet as he peered through the rain; another rode up to a little knoll and did his best to obliterate himself under a tree; from time to time each returned and reported to the lieutenant or sergeant in command. I rode past them and then suddenly met a couple of riders prying through the trees: this was the beginning of the Bavarians. Next moment there was a heavy trampling along the road, and up swung a battalion of blue Bavarian infantry. Without a moment's pause they wheeled to the right, breaking in the instant into companies in line, and then, bent a little forward, rifles ready, moved swiftly towards the trees where the Prussian battalions had piled arms. A crack, two cracks, a rattle — the armies were in touch and the fighting had begun. And for that day it was over. The day's work was to get in touch of the enemy — a race for position. It had been done thoroughly,

strenuously, exactly as in war. And now, what next? The men had been eight hours on the march in a never-ceasing alternation of drizzle and downpour. To make them bivouac in two inches of water would be to invite the country's defenders to die of inflammation and rheumatic fever. So they were billeted. From house to house, over 1200 square miles, went soldiers with little bits of paper quartering the troops—in this house five men, in that an officer or two; here four horses, there a gun. The possibility had been foreseen, but until the last moment it had been intended to bivouac. Yet in four hours 100,000 men, and heaven knows how many horses, guns, and waggons, were safely under shelter. No confusion, no perplexity, no hitch. That is the German army.

The fourth day was even more eloquent. It had been arranged that the Prussians were in retreat, and the day's exercise was for cavalry to break them up. The Kaiser himself took command of the cavalry, and to give him a force worthy of a Kaiser the divisions of both sides were combined in one corps. But then the retreating Prussians must have cavalry too. So somebody said a word, and at dawn a new cavalry division had appeared in the field. Six thousand men, fully horsed, fully accoutred for war, had been

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called up from somewhere at a moment's notice, and there they were ready. I don't know where they came from, perhaps from Metz, perhaps from Magdeburg, it does not matter. At the word of command there they instantly were ready. That, again, is the German army.

There had been two days of heavy fighting in between. No one man could have seen the whole of it, for the line was ten miles long, but it was presumably all the same, infantry lying down in line, hostile infantry lying down opposite them, a lively crackle of fire, and the guns booming behind. Then on one side a harsh yell of command; one line springs up and makes a rush over the field and through the tree trunks at the other. Half-way they lie down, and their fire rings out again as that of the opposite line slackens. Then up spring the assailants again and rush on. "Lively fire," yells the captain in the defending line. "Lively fire," roar the sergeants after him. The guns are suddenly hushed as the attacking line makes its last rush; the captains' and sergeants' whistles scream on the other, and the blank cartridges spit out a breathless rush of fire. Then the two lines stand panting and grinning at each other ten yards apart. "How's that, umpire?" "Successful charge," says the umpire, and the defenders troop back to a new position. Or else "Unsuc-

cessful," and the defending peasants guffaw as the assailants troop back to begin over again.

The Kaiser's day was different. I stood on a long hill and watched the Prussians in retreat. Down at the bottom on one side the last battalion was marching in solid column along a valley road; at the other side were stealing up the blue uniforms of a weak Bavarian bicycle corps. Suddenly, miles away on the left, came a few horsemen riding swiftly over the extreme shoulder of the hill. Then the black mass of a squadron, the silhouette of a horse battery, and then mass on mass, a whole division, 6000 sabres, glided swiftly into sight. Farther still on the sky-line, another gliding mass, another pursuing division. The retreating battalion had left the road now; it was trudging patiently up the opposite hill, the long lines of four companies, one behind the other. The infantry could not see the hunting cavalry, the hunters were almost tumbling over the quarry. The foremost riders reined up, whipped round, and galloped furiously back. They had seen them: but the infantry trudged on up the hill. For the Kaiser it was a critical moment. The leader of a cavalry corps must be a man of steel nerves and instant decision: cavalry has no time to balance chances. And in the instant the Kaiser decided. The huge black mass swayed and parted, and the

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bulk of it disappeared rapidly over the sky-line ; the Kaiser was going on to strike at the bulk of the retreating division farther on. But there remained the blotch of one regiment and one battery. Hastily the battery broke up into six guns, unlimbered, was flashing imaginary shrapnel into the plodding infantry. The cavalry spread itself as by machinery into line ; without check or hesitation it rode down the hill, across the road, up again until it was on a level with the infantry. The battalion would be caught on its flank, and rolled up like paper : what were its officers looking at ? But as the thundering line swept down on it the hoarse echo of an order floated across the valley. There was the turn and click of a kaleidoscope, and the infantry were not four lines marching up hill but one lying down facing the charge. The cavalry flew on — horses leaping and plunging, but level as if they were tied together — out spurted the rifle fire, on flew the chargers. Then twenty yards off they stopped, two-thirds of the line opposite the infantry, one-third lapping round its left flank. A word from the umpire, the charge had succeeded. The guns had shaken the infantry ; the charge had broken it ; the outflanking squadrons had stamped it to pieces.

Meanwhile the Kaiser had ridden on four miles, and was repeating the process on a big scale with

the main body of the retreating division. In front of a pale village with a square church tower I could just see wave after wave of cavalry sweeping over the fields as if devouring them. I could see the flash of the guns and the rippling blaze of the infantry fire. When I got up they had just charged home, and the division was collecting itself again. The Kaiser had come up swiftly across country in just the right place at just the right moment, he had never lost a moment by hesitation, yet he had not struck till the moment when his blow must be crushing. I wonder how many men could take 12,000 riders ten miles across a strange country, plump into the middle of the enemy, and fall on him unexpected at the instant when he was exposed? For my ignorance it seems almost superhuman. An average Emperor possibly, but a most brilliant cavalry general.

CHAPTER XII

HOW TO BE A GERMAN

THE essence of the German character — it is always enlightening to find a formula, so long as you do not apply it to death — is the weight it lays on trifles. That is the source alike of German strength and of German weakness. You see it at its best in the complete and powerful organisation, for example of the army. You see it on its weak side in the emphasis with which Germany underlines and doubly underlines things that do not matter. All things seem to be of equal, supreme importance to the German. He has no perspective. He is always on the strain, always doing his utmost. The keynote of his character is that he has nothing in hand.

Take the smallest item of his daily life. You cannot caricature the German. Caricature implies going farther than the object caricatured along its own lines, developing and exaggerating its features until they become ridiculous. But the German has gone to the very end already; his features are

already developed to exaggeration. Here is a group of Germans who have been out shooting: cocks' feathers in their hats, Tyrolese suits, bare knees, knitted gaiters, dogs at their feet — they are the very pictures we have seen on mugs since we were babies. You could not caricature them; they are caricatures already; they have nothing in reserve.

One day in Hamburg I saw a heavy waggon which the horses could hardly pull up a slippery hill. The carter whipped them up; they refused to try. There was a policeman near by, but he, of course, did nothing to help: he was taking a note. A crowd collected, and began to help; half-a-dozen people tugged at each wheel, half-a-dozen more pushed behind; the thing creaked, moved; the horses came up to the collar and off it went. The people ran along by it in procession, took off their hats and gave three ringing cheers. And the carter — he took off his hat and bowed, cracked his whip, and went off waving it round his head, laughing and dancing on the box in a delirium of triumph. What more could he do if he had won the Derby? He had nothing in hand.

The Germans lavish so much of themselves on the small and ordinary things of life that they can have nothing to spare for the greater. If a steamer goes faster than another steamer they never speak

of it but as a "fast-steamer" — and then what word is left for the "Wilhelm der Grosse"? The very Kaiser could not possibly improve on his solemnity of aspect were it never so necessary: if he ever had a tragic, an immortal moment, a new retreat from Moscow, or a new surrender of Sedan, he could not look any more impressive than he does when he is going out for a drive. Germany to-day is so loaded with monuments, showing that she conquered France in 1870, that if she now conquered the whole world there would be no room to commemorate the feat. All this makes you ponder. Everything is so complete, so mapped out, so tensely strong every day, that you wonder what would happen in an unforeseen and unfamiliar crisis. Would not everything break down? Every moment, over every trifle, Germany seems to be doing every jot it knows: if it were called on to do more, could there be any more forthcoming?

The knock-about adventurous race of Britain has this tradition, that when the moment of need comes every subaltern will command a regiment, every voter will form a Ministry. He has never done it before, he seems to have no particular qualification for it, but — he does it. Somehow or other, against all the rules, he pulls it through. He has a reserve of strength — yes, and even of

tact — stored away somewhere, and at the supreme moment it comes into play. Has the German? For the affirmative it must be said that the German, being of a cautious and very practical turn, succeeds as a colonist in new lands better than any countryman, except the Scotsman. And yet — it may be unreasonable — the doubt remains. Except in the army, the German has flung himself headlong into the details of so narrow, so straitly circumscribed a sphere, that you are bound to believe the initiative must be in some degree starved within him. He concentrates himself so thoroughly on doing what he is told, that you are bound to wonder how much he could do if he were not told.

One thing, at least, seems certain — it is the German's deification of small things that enables him contentedly to live under his present rule. Contrariwise, it is the emphasis laid by his present rule on trifles that maintains their sanctity unimpaired. Small things are so well organised by the police that, being unable to do without these small things, he accepts the police as the necessary price to pay. "But you seem, Mr. Steevens," said a German lady of cultivation and intelligence, "to have a wholly false idea of our German freedom. When I travel in Russia I feel lost and miserable; there is no official looking after me; I feel that if I were to die in a corner nobody would know it,

and nobody would care. But as soon as I cross the frontier back into Germany I feel comfortable and secure. I know that there are officials looking after me, whose business it is to see that I come to no harm." That, of course, is a point of view like another. If you accept your official in that spirit, then he will do much to serve you. I said in my first paper, and with fuller experience I can repeat, that I have not found German officials uncivil. Quite the reverse; if civilly treated they will go out of their way to oblige you. Certainly it is best to take off your hat to them, and to the free (if snobbish) Englishman this is painful. But the Englishman must bear in mind that in Germany to take off your hat is not a sign of servility or a confession of inferiority; it is the minimum of courtesy which you use to all people of all stations. The German's manners, you must also remember, are like everything else German — there is none of them in reserve; all the goods are put into the shop window of outward observance. Now if you treat the official with the ordinary German good manners, and happen to know the right official to apply to in each case, he will be kind to you. As my friend said, he is then a stand-by and a comfort; only I cannot think that the attitude of leaning on the official's arm is conducive to standing by yourself.

Whether the German made Germany or Germany made the German it would be unprofitable to inquire. It is with them as with all peoples and governments; each people gets the government it needs and deserves, and one is constantly influencing the other. The essential point is that the middle classes of Germany are, on the whole, very well satisfied with their Government. The Government confines their activity to the details of life, and in details they are very much interested and quite happy. All classes have an intense love of pleasure. They do not generally get the credit of this among those who have not watched them; but though they take their pleasures more quietly than the French or Italians, or even the Austrians, they take them with full enjoyment. Beer-drinking, smoking, talking, and listening to the band, will keep them quiet for years. Their love of art — the theatre, the opera, pictures — is perhaps well educated rather than intellectual; but this also is a far greater factor in their lives than it is in ours. All this keeps them contented. The most irritating rule hardly irritates them; the most barbarous would hardly drive them to revolution.

To sum it all up, the German is the soul of economy. He makes the most of everything, himself included. In affairs of money, he is the most sparing of men — sparing as only he can be

whose currency is measured in a coin of which eight go to an English penny. It is enough to say that he always carries his nickels — worth $\frac{5}{8}$ d. and $1\frac{1}{4}$ d. — in a purse. Even when he is dissipated he proceeds warily and with system, so as to get the last possible ounce of dissipation for his five-shilling piece. You seldom hear of a German who went the pace in youth and then settled down; the young man who has gone the pace gets so utterly lost, so cut off from all national experience and tradition, so deep out of his depth, that he often finishes up by fraud and prison, or suicide. It must be one thing or the other for the German — level-headed economy or sheer reckless ruin. And as he makes the most of his money, so he makes the most of his dignity, of his adjectives, of his shooting-suit, of his satisfaction when his horses decide to pull him up hill, of his victories, of his Kaisership. Quietly, methodically, surely, the German is always making the most of small things. He never draws back for a great effort; he is making small efforts continually. Sometimes ridiculous, usually most effective, always well satisfied with himself, he lives with his second-best foot foremost.

CHAPTER XIII

DOWN WITH ENGLAND!

WILLIAM II. is not, as I have explained already, adored by all his subjects. But at one point he gathers up the blind devotion of the younger part of them, and the enthusiastic approval of all. That point is patriotism, which the German people, most rightly, regard as the first qualification of a German emperor. Frederick III. squandered all his hoard of popularity during the three months of his reign, because he was believed to be led by his English wife. William II. recoups his heavy debts of personal unpopularity because he is beyond suspicion and beyond measure German. His whole life is a perpetual chant of "Deutschland, Deutschland, über Alles." He adds the corollary, "Wilhelm, Wilhelm, über Deutschland;" but Germany, on the whole, is quite willing to pay for the practical enforcement of the first sentiment with quiet acquiescence in the second.

The depth and fervour of the Kaiser's Ger-

manism needs no excuse and no witness. Everything about him must be German — except, to be sure, his racing yacht, and trifles of that kind. It is true that he has many English tastes. But when the Germans cite that as a sign of his benevolence towards England I think they are more polite than discerning. Unquestionably the Kaiser admires us in many ways; but I think he imitates us in some, with a view to naturalise in his own country what he thinks valuable, the better to equip her for rivalry with us. He would like to see his nobility and officers sportsmen, to see his middle class tinctured with the spirit of the merchant-adventurer — very properly, from his point of view. On other points he is said to be even fanatically German. I pass over such tittle-tattle as that he once wrote to his mother to say that if she wished him to answer her letters, she must write in German, not English. It is said, though, that he cannot tolerate a French *menu*, so that the wretched cooks of the royal household have had to invent German names for every dish they send to table. In the best hotels of Berlin you will find a *menu* in German on one side, French on the other — for the very German does not know what “Beef, loin piece, Niederschlossberg way,” might mean until he sees it translated, “Filet béarnaise,” on the other side. As for the Kaiser,

they say his zeal for the German language goes so far that he cannot even do with the imported word "cigar." Instead, he endowed his people's tongue with the alternatives, "glim-stick" and "smoke-roll." Neither masterpiece is yet generally accepted.

These are all straws, to be sure, but they show which way the wind blows. More outspoken are the Kaiser's many references to "Greater Germany," his frequent unmistakable hints that he aspires to have his country one of the great imperial influences of the world. It is this that brings him up against England. Rivalry in trade, rivalry in projects of colonisation and empire—these, beyond question, are the chief springs that feed German hostility towards England.

Hostility, of course, could not have waxed and flourished as it has without a fertile soil to grow in. Competition in South Africa, or for the Peruvian export trade, is not enough to make two nations hate each other. As in England a Kaiser's telegram was the occasion, but the German clerk the real cause, of anti-German hatred, so with Germany the groundwork of dislike was the utter antipathy and repugnance with which the German regards our manners and national character. Both as a nation and as individuals the Germans detest us. True, they water their detestation with a

sneaking admiration for our sports, our athletics, our clothes. In the German sporting papers you will meet such sentences as "Trainer Brown, wird die letzten Galops seiner Cracks selbst leiten; sein Firststring, Little Duck, wird für die Chesterfield Stakes starten." But meet the man who talks this sort of language, and dresses in the nearest he can get to a covert-coat — and tell him he looks like an Englishman. In his heart he will rejoice, but he will pretend to be insulted. With the German anglo-maniac, as with the Kaiser, it is some of our ways, not our whole selves, that are to be imitated.

Deep down there is a strong unity of nature between Englishman and German which fits them to become fast friends. Should chance strand the two together in a desolate place, they will usually get on admirably well together. "Of course," says the German, "because I am friendly with you, I do not therefore love England." "Well," answer you, "our countries may not get on, but that's no reason why we should not." And you do get on. After all, we are first cousins with the German and only second cousins with, say, the Frenchman. I assisted one evening during manoeuvres at a dispute between a German and a Belgian officer about the distance between Lille, I think it was, and the sea. The Belgian had got his country and the frontier mapped out in his

hand into ten-kilometre squares, but they went wrong somehow. The German remembered the distance from the campaign of Waterloo as so many marches, and got it roughly right. That is the difference between English and German on the one side, and Latin and Celt on the other. They are all for the geometrical, the abstract; we get a grip on the concrete. So far, in this common ground, English and Germans are cut out by Nature to understand each other, to be friends.

But then they very seldom get near enough to give the common factor a chance. Outside they are as absolutely different as inside they are alike. The German is demonstrative, sentimental, gushing; we are cold, matter-of-fact, reserved. The two natures may become friends if circumstances push them to it; but they can hardly be congenial acquaintances, and the difficulty in acquaintance usually blocks the way to friendship. "When I went to England," sighed a German lady to me, "I was ill, and in trouble. I wrote to my friends I had known so well in Germany, and, ach! they were so cold, so stiff. They asked me to their houses, but they asked me at a fixed hour—to lunch, to tea, to dinner. If they had been in our country we should have rushed to see them, and they would never have been out of our house." "Yes," I said, "I can quite believe that. But

that was only our manner: I think they really felt kindly towards you." "Ach, yes," she cried, and tears came into her eyes; "never can I forget what heart-love I experienced in England when they found I was really nigh to death. I shall always love England, though I was so wretched there. But at first the stiffness drove me to despair."

There it is, you see. You see both sides of it. But the point is that the external antipathy is a far more potent factor in national relations than the inner sympathy. Few experience the last; all can feel and resent the first. Therefore it is that an anti-English policy in Germany starts with a prodigiously strong leverage of national dislike.

Now to hark back to the policy. "Our Kaiser," said one of my German friends, "is one of the greatest men of history. He has the clear eye and the strong will. He sees that the time for Continental policy is gone by; first of Germans, he pursues a world policy. Up to now England has pursued world policy while all the other nations pursued Continental policy; England has had no rival. From now on we Germans pursue a world policy also. To do this is the greatness of our Kaiser. But, alas! nowhere is this greatness less appreciated than in Germany."

That is true. For the German colonies even

the strongest Bismarckians have little to say. They will faintly suggest that there may be valuable land in the interior of Damaraland, where nobody has been, but they will hardly allege that much has been done with their colonies so far. Outside the ruling Prussian circles most people would be in favour of giving them up. As for the strong navy, which is the essential condition of world policy, the people, as a whole, are dead against spending the money. They say they spend quite enough on the army for one nation, and they call the Kaiser "Yondol-Willy," which is Berlinese for Willy the Boatman.

"But I am thinking," pursued my friend, when I offered these remarks, "that some day we shall have the Dutch colonies also — not by force, but because we must naturally absorb Holland. And then" — his mouth watered before my eyes — "what rich colonies! It will be well worth the fleet. And though we can never be a naval Power, like England, yet — together with France and Russia, and two corps, only two corps landed in England — we would take London, my friend."

Germany, France, and Russia! I would not say positively that is what the Kaiser is working for, but certainly it is what his warmest sympathisers believed him to be working for. For myself, I believe it too. For years now he has been trying to

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draw nearer to France and Russia, and the public announcement of the Franco-Russian alliance is no real set-back to the design. The Continental alliance against Britain — that is the dream, the daily and nightly preoccupation, of all Imperialist Germans. It is some little way off yet, because even the Kaiser would hardly dare give back Metz in the lifetime of the men who bled at Gravelotte. “But it will come, my friend, and where will you and your navy be then?”

“Yes, where shall we be — if come it does?”

CHAPTER XIV

ON THE GERMAN ARMY

“It is a noiseless engine—like doing from the topmost general to the bottommost soldier.” That is the description of the German army given to me by a member of it. And the description is no over-statement. The German army is the most perfectly adapted, perfectly running machine. Never can there have been a more signal triumph of organisation over complexity. The armies of other nations in days past may have been as well organised, but the problem of organisation was infinitely less complex. The armies of other nations to-day may be as complex, but they are not so completely organised. To quote my friend again, in the French, the Austrian, the Italian services, “it works, but it works not with oil.” The German army is the finest thing of its kind in the world; it is the finest thing in Germany of any kind. It is even worth the price that Germany pays for it.

To the Germans themselves the army is the

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cause and the justification of the whole nation. Comment to a person on the want of personal liberty in some little detail of daily life, and he counters at once with an appeal to the army. "Yes; it is no doubt annoying to an Englishman to have to wait on a railway platform till the guard tells him he may get in; but then you must remember that we have powerful military nations on both frontiers." To the English mind the logic is ridiculous; to the German it is irrefragable. He accepts the deforming of his country as a necessary correlative to the efficiency of his army. He may approve or he may disapprove. "I belong to it," said an officer to me, "and belonging to it I see what a splendid thing it is, and I'm very proud of it; but I see also that it's the ruin of everything else in Germany." But even to this exceptional officer it did not seem to occur that civil life need not be cut to the military pattern. For good or evil the army is Germany.

Germany pays dear for it, and the year's military budget represents only the smallest fraction of the burden. Two to three years out of the life of every working man, one year out of the life of everybody else, eight weeks a year for five years more, the whole lives of thirty thousand of the best men in the country — these are only the most obvious of the other items. Germany pays cruelly

— but also gets something back. To the English eye the German private appears lumpish and stupid. Heavy in form, heavy in face, he just does what he is told to do, like a rather clumsy machine. At the manœuvres you may see whole companies, when they are not ordered to march or fire, lying down with their faces on the ground, not taking the dimmest interest in the operations which are the test and the crown of their whole year's work. Yet if they are dull, you may safely say that without their years of service they would be duller yet. Take your peasant for two years into a garrison with a company of 120 others; teach him drill and discipline, show him at least a corner of the world; he will not go back quite the clod he came. No doubt the quickening of his wits has primary regard to military operations: at the manœuvres it was a revelation to see the peasants turn out of their huts and drop their carting, to see the keenness with which they followed the troops, recognising the name, the nature, and intention of each evolution. Seeing this, you began to understand what the phrase "a military nation" means. But it is safe to conclude that the man whose intelligence is sharpened to the point of following and understanding military manœuvres is sharpened in his appreciation of other sides of life also. In the towns, where the

mind does not need the stimulus of military training, the good of it works out in the body. The years of service are the only healthy ones in the German's life : they stiffen him out of a flaccid boy into a straight-shouldered man. In after life he may degenerate into a beer-barrel, but it takes years to get the soldierly set out of his limbs. Returning from Germany, you find it almost painful to walk about London : what business have these slouching, stooping, chestless young men in our imperial city ?

But good influence or bad in the country, that is not the question. The country exists for the army, not the army for the country. In the army German thoroughness, German industry, German common-sense, German devotion to duty, are found at their full. From the chief of the great General Staff to the driver of the field-telegraph waggon every man knows what he has to do, and every man does it. There is some definite person charged with every possible service that war might require. To find out about foreign armies ; to determine what force, applied in what way, is necessary to defeat them ; to raise and train that force, to supply it with arms, ammunition, food, clothing, saddlery, medical attendance ; to move it from one place to another, to lead it into the field — the details of every function have

been thought out beforehand, and have been provided for. "Suppose war should suddenly break out," I said to an officer on leave, "I suppose you make for your regiment at once." "No," he replied: "if war breaks out I go at once to Niederschlossburg: there are certain horses there which I have to requisition." "Do you know exactly where to lay your hands on them?" He smiled. "Should I be of any use if I did n't?" he asked. No waiting in war time to ask what is wanted and then find it: he just goes and gets the horses.

Briefly, the difference between the German and, for instance, the English armies is a single one. The German army is organised with a view to war, with the cold, hard, practical, business-like purpose of winning victories. The question what show it makes in the eyes of Germany or the world comes a long way second; absolute efficiency is its one and only test. In Germany you can stake your life that every pfennig spent on the army is honestly spent, and that every man or horse or cartridge that is on paper is there in fact; and that, what with official corruption and lassitude, and a desire to put off public opinion, is what you cannot be certain of in any other nation on earth. The British army, we hear, is ready to go anywhere and do anything; but when we say that,

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we are talking only of the temper of its officers and men. In the German army the men are ready, and the plan, the railway-carriages, the gas for the war-balloons, and the nails for the horse-stores, are all ready too.

It is wonderful ; but there is one thing about the German army more wonderful still. In the organisation of civil life and government the tendency of Germany appears to be towards the resolute suppression of the individual. You are not to think, to decide, to act for yourself ; the Government, the police, think and decide, and you are to do what they tell you. In the army it is exactly the opposite. Subordination, discipline, certainly — but also quick and independent judgment, initiative, fearless assumption of responsibility. “ Without shirking from responsibility ” — so runs the Kaiser’s regulations — “ every officer in all circumstances, however unusual, is to stake his whole being on the accomplishment of his mission, even without waiting for orders.”

It seems a strange self-contradiction this insistence on the development of initiative in the army by the side of its systematic repression elsewhere. But the answer would probably be that in civil life the citizen is as the private, the police as the officer. The officer does not begin to face responsibility till he becomes a captain — but then he gets his fill of

it. The training of his company — or squadron or battery — is left to his own unaided judgment. He decides what exercises shall be undertaken, when and how often; he alone has the administration, the discipline, and punishment of his company in his hands. Inside the company he is supreme; his superiors are only concerned with the fitness of the company when the captain has made it. Thus the major takes his four companies and is responsible for their training as a battalion; the colonel takes his three battalions and makes a regiment of them. Thus, all through the military year, the training goes on, in higher and higher units, till the recruits are welded into brigades, divisions, and army corps, and as such exercised at the manœuvres. None of the higher officers is burdened with the routine of the unit below: he gives himself whole-heartedly to his battalion, his regiment, his brigade, his division, his corps — to perfecting each for its work in the field, and to directing the perfected force in action.

In the manœuvres you could see the system in action, in the snap and go and dash at every point. The men looked bumpkins, but they were bumpkins drilled into unswerving, unhesitating obedience. A battery was surprised by infantry fire: one word and the guns were in line, the limbers were unhooked and falling behind, the guns were shipped

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round and flashing imaginary shell before you quite realised that the battery was there. The cavalry came into line like the turn of a kaleidoscope. The infantry opened fire, charged, fell back, lined up, and opened fire again, charged again, on either side, like a smart rally at tennis. No officer was content to rest on the defensive ; a glimpse of an opening, and he was up and at the enemy. The captain knew his company ; he had made it, and his career depended on the way he had made it. Each higher officer knew what he could do with what he had. Within that limit he was untrammelled in the doing of it, and could give his whole heart and head freely to doing it with the intensest energy. It impressed you as a mighty, resistless machine, all in one piece, and yet working quite freely in every joint. Each wheel seemed flying round on its own account, yet you could see that the guides and connecting rods — smooth, well-oiled, but fast-fixed — were combining and regulating the whole.

Nothing overlooked, nothing neglected, everything practised, everything welded together, and yet everything alive and fighting. The highest unity with the most strenuous individuality. The army is a machine. Yet the men remain men. And what should we do if 100,000 of this kind of army got loose in England ? Volunteers ? Good Lord !

CHAPTER XV

AND LAST

THE wandering observations about Germany and the Germans, which conclude herewith, may call for apology or may not. If I were to judge by the plenteous crop of letters I received about them, they have been disfigured by every fault of head and heart. I have had letters from Germans correcting my English, letters from Englishmen informing me on Germany, letters from both insisting on my mental and moral depravity. I struggle inwardly against the conviction of this depravity, but it is not for me to deny it here. It is enough to say that I am not so conceited as to suppose ten years' superficial acquaintance with a country, and two months' professed investigation of it, give me a right to propound my opinions from a judgment-seat. The opinions that have been expressed are the opinions of Germans selected by the most impartial of all arbitrators — chance; and if anything in them has given offence to Germans, it is consoling to know that it is only the reflex of what

has been expressed in yet stronger form by their own countrymen.

But whatever excuse the correspondent may need for his way of treating the subject, the newspaper assuredly needs none for setting him on to it. To the Englishman to-day there is no country whose characteristics, methods, and aims can more profitably be brought before his notice than Germany's. It has interest for us, indirectly, as a land governed on principles almost directly antagonistic to our own. The individual German is interesting as a being curiously akin to us, yet curiously differentiated, strangely unsympathetic on the surface, yet with a strong affinity below it. Above all, the present activity of Germany in the world must be of vital concern to our country; and while it awakens respect, it must needs stimulate keen emulation.

We have only lately discovered Germany as a rival, and — unfortunately, perhaps, but not unnaturally — we do not like our discovery. Germany discovered us sooner as an object of commercial, and later of political, attack; unreasonably, perhaps, but again not unnaturally, she resented our resentment. But, whether we like it or not, — and this is the first great point to fix on, — Germany prospers and will prosper. It is opposed to Anglo-Saxon prepossessions to believe

that a nation can grow great under an autocracy, but Germany is proving it. Wherever you go you find evidence of growing wealth and greatness. It leaps up before your eyes from year to year. In Germany they are always building. Here it is a splendid railway station, the old one being inadequate to the traffic; here a row of fine shops; there a huge factory; there, again, a row of palatial villas for the men who are making their fortunes. Now it is a new electrical company which is floated; last week an Atlantic liner that made a record; yesterday a three-million mark margarine company. In Germany they tell you that the country is just beginning to recover from the Thirty Years' War, and if convalescence has been tardy it is certainly vigorous. Perhaps it would be more correct to say that German disunity, of which the Thirty Years' War was the most fatal exemplification, has been salved by the union of 1871.

There are people in England who expect that the remedy will itself promote a relapse into disease again. Germany cannot stand its present Government for long, they say, and will collapse again as suddenly as she rose. I do not believe it. Industrially she has outlived that elevation and that fall, the boom and the smash which followed the new Empire. In the years immediately following 1871 it was no infrequent sight to see bricklayers'

labourers returning from their work in carriages, drinking champagne out of a bottle. Then followed a period of failure and destitution. But now industry has found its level; labourers earn from 15s. a-week, unskilled, to 24s. for artisans, and that compares well enough, on the respective standards of living, with England. Clerks are far worse off — £3 to 30s. a-month — but where are they not? It is true that in Berlin banks a young man will be earning £250 a-year at the age when in more expensive London he would be getting £150. But this is exceptional, and it is the class of clerks principally which empties itself out across the North Sea and then goes back. We object, but can you blame the clerk?

For, socially as well as industrially, Germany has sown her wild oats. There will be no German revolution in the visible future. Particularism, as I have said, is dying hard, but inevitably dying. Socialism is not the covered mine which many people suppose it. The German mind is given to reckless theorising about ideal states of society, as about all other ideals, but the German workman is not the man for barricades. He is not unprosperous, and though he is undeniably discontented, he is making slow but sure progress in his political aims. In practice the German Socialist is not more than a Radical trade-unionist, and as

such he is making a steady advance towards his ends. In the near future he will probably maintain that advance, so that the very strengthening of Social Democracy will make it less discontented and less dangerous. Most Germans would deny this; yet I have talked with many who admit it freely.

One difficulty may be foreseen — the question of the navy. If the Kaiser insists and the Reichstag refuses, there is the making of a serious internal situation. If next year's new Reichstag defies the Kaiser and is dissolved, and the next Reichstag is again defiant, we may see a complete deadlock and a constitutional crisis. But neither the Kaiser's impetuosity nor his people's obstinacy are likely to force crisis to revolution. There is likely to be much friction and faction in the immediate future, as there has been in the past. But there will be no revolution in Germany.

Germany, that means, will keep her hands free to deal with us. Let us make no mistake about it. It is natural to deplore the unfriendship of the two nations, but it is idle to ignore it. Hostility to England is the mission of young Germany.

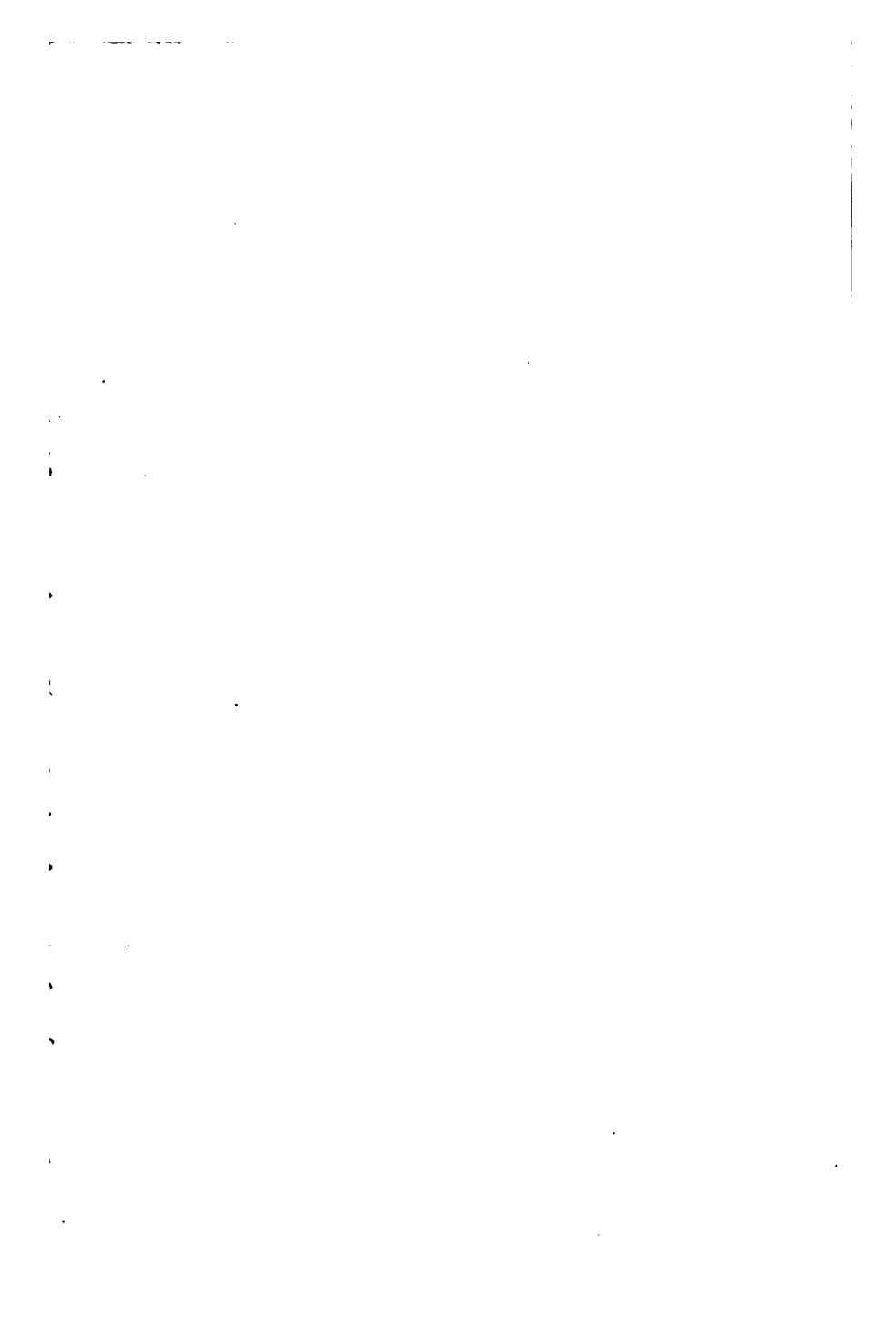
We need not suppose that this means war. We are not likely to attack any German interest, and in the immediate future Germany is not likely to attack directly any of ours. What we have to

look for is an attempt on the Kaiser's part to draw the Continent together in general antagonism to our policy. The German-Franco-Russian alliance is in the womb of time, but it may yet come to birth: if it ever does its aim will be, first, no doubt to keep the peace on the Continent, but, secondly, to obstruct this country in every quarter of the world. We have also, meantime, to look for attempts to create German interests all over the world where they may constitute an obstacle for us. Just as in 1896 the Transvaal suddenly became an honorary member of Greater Germany, so Samoa, China, Holland, may come to be. With and through all, the present battle of trade will become ever acuter.

It is idle to ignore it, but we need be neither furious nor panic-stricken. It is as much Germany's right to seek after the good things of the earth as it is ours. It is proper that we should be plain with ourselves, and admit that for the time Germany is our chiefest rival in all fields. We can be competitors without being enemies. Only in the honest effort to avoid enmity we need not cease to compete. Be very sure, at least, that methodical, patient, unresting Germany will make no such mistake. So, for the next ten years, fix your eyes very hard on Germany. ✓

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